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STORIES OF
THE ARMY



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STORIES OF
THE ARMY



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STORIES OF THE ARMY



MEMORIES

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS

A CHARGE FOR FRANCE

BY JOHN HEARD, JR.

SERGEANT GORE

BY LEROY ARMSTRONG

THE TALE OF A GOBLIN HORSE

BY CHARLES C. NOTT



MEMORIES

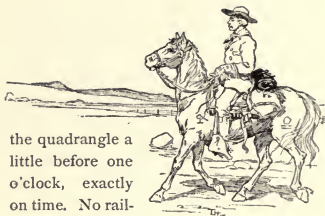
BY BRANDER MATTHEWS

With Illustrations by Theodore Hampe





HEN Christmas broke over the fort in the far Northwest where Lieutenant - Robert Douglas, U.S.A., was stationed, the wind was blowing gently from the southeast. There had been a light snowfall during the night, and as the sun arose there was a faint suggestion of warmth in the beams that glistened across the crystalline flakes. It seemed as though the cold had loosened its grip for a while. All through the morning the weather was mild for the season and for the place, and by noon there was even a vague hint of a possible thaw. The mail-rider who brought the weekly bag of letters and newspapers had trotted his broncho into



the quadrangle a little before one o'clock, exactly on time. No railroad and no telegraph line linked Fort Roosevelt with the rest of the world, and only once in seven days did the soldiers who were stationed on the outpost of civilization get news from its headquarters. Time was when the troopers quartered there had fought the Indians of the border ; but the rotting stockade had been torn down long since, and Fort Roosevelt was now a fort in name only. Its narrow, low buildings, made of logs, shacked sometimes, and sometimes squared and more regularly joined, still

sheltered brave men, but they no longer needed to do battle with redskins; they had to confront a white enemy only, and they found cold winter a fiercer foe and more unrelenting than the Sioux. Its assault was harder to withstand, for, although the Indian is now armed with the repeating rifle his armory is not exhaustless—and nature's is. Outside of the government reservation there was no house within fifty miles, save the tumble-down cabin of a Missouri squatter four or five furlongs away at the bend of the river. No friendly smoke curling hospitably upward comforted the eye that might interrogate the horizon.

It was about two o'clock when the blizzard began. At noon a solemn stillness filled the air, after the wind from the southeast had died away early in the day. Then, all at once, there was a black cloud in the northwest, swelling forward boldly—on the plains of the West, as on the

coasts of the East, the most dangerous northwester is wont to come butt-end first. Lieutenant Douglas saw the signal and knew its significance. He looked at his watch; there would be time for the trooper to return before the storm was upon them. Two of the lank and sallow children of Pike County Pete lay sick of a fever in the wretched cabin by the elbow of the river; they were attended by the surgeon of the post, and they had been nursed by the doctor's daughter, Lucy. It was to them that the officer had sent a mounted messenger with a few delicacies from his scant store, such as the doctor had suggested. Douglas stood for a moment at the corner of the parade between the storehouse of the commissary and the long single-story stables. He was a young man still, despite the grizzled mustache which curved over his resolute mouth, and the touch of gray in his hair. His eye was sharp and his figure straight and

sturdy. As he gazed the black cloud up-rose and spread wide, and the blizzard broke. He caught the first breath of the icy simoom which came sweeping across the Sahara of arid snow, and he went back into the stables to give a few words of warning and advice to his men.

When he came out a little later to cross the quadrangle to the officers' quarters, the breeze had freshened and quickened until it blew a gale. The velocity of the wind was increasing, and it was already thirty miles an hour. Within sixty minutes the temperature fell as many degrees. The atmosphere, thick with flying snow, as fine as sand and as sharp as a needle, began to darken as though it were already nightfall. The lieutenant strode through the storm, which for the most part was steady and unswerving, although now and again a gust swept sideways, and for a few seconds there might be an eddy. But the break was for a moment only. Then the

wind gathered its strength and again rushed ahead, irresistible and pitiless. A fine shower of icy particles, frozen snow-dust, and solid rain-drops, made Douglas's passage from the stable to his own door almost impossible, sheltered as was the little square within the buildings of the fort. Out in the open no one can make headway against the ice-blast for long, and only the most experienced plainsman can hold his own.

The stout log-house in which the officers had their quarters shook with the fury of the gale as Robert Douglas entered the sitting-room he shared with his fellow-subaltern, Paulding Van Dyke. The mail had been distributed, and the servant had laid on the table the letters and papers of the two officers. For Van Dyke there were at least a dozen envelopes, besides two or three packets—presents, no doubt, thought Douglas, as he took up his single letter from a tidy heap of newspapers on

which it rested. It was Christmas afternoon, and probably Van Dyke was at the doctor's little house talking to Lucy, whom he was to marry in the spring—and that was why he was now neglecting the many Christmas greetings the mail-rider had brought him.

Douglas tore open his own letter, and as he read it his face brightened and his eyes lost a little of their severity. It was a brief note from the editor of an important review in New York, declaring that he had great pleasure in accepting

Mr. Douglas's thoughtful and admirable essay, "How to Train the Indian for Citizenship," and he hoped to find room for it in an early number. The officer had taken the letter to the light to read ;



and having put the editorial communication into his pocket he stood at the window, silent in thought. On the level ground before his door the fantasy of the wind had heaped a grave-like mound of snow, as though some frozen giant had been buried there. Douglas's eyes fell on it unwittingly, and the sorrowful shrieking of the wind, as though demons were chanting a dirge, struck chill on his ear, and he shivered.

He turned away and threw another cotton-wood stick on the fire, which was waning with the weariness of ashen age. Then he set a chair between the light and the heat, and gathering up his heap of newspapers he sat down. He broke the wrappers and arranged the papers in order; they were a week's issue of the *Gotham Gazette*, for it was by taking a New York daily journal that he kept touch of the world. He began to read the earliest in date, in which the freshest news was

then a fortnight stale. Rumors of wars there were a plenty, and the young soldier, immured in a wooden house in a vast loneliness, was almost ready to wish himself a Russian that his blood might be tingling with the ardor of impending battle. There followed an account of a grand ball in London, and a description of a new play in Paris; but for Robert Douglas these items of intelligence lacked interest. Yet with the persistence of one whose reading matter is rationed, he perused diligently the long column of cable despatches from Europe. Suddenly, as he read, his face flushed, and then blanched. His grasp on the paper tightened and his eyes travelled swiftly till he came to the end of the paragraph. Then an unconscious sigh broke from him. He lowered the newspaper and sat still, staring at the blank wall before him.

Outside, the blizzard blew with untiring swiftness, but the thoughts of the lonely

man within were quicker yet. These bore him far away, across time and space, back to his childhood. He saw himself again a boy of ten, passing his grievous first day at a military academy in a little town in New York, on the banks of the Hudson. It was a winter morning and there was snow in the air when he was brought before the principal, an old West Pointer,



kindly in intent, strict in discipline. On the principal's knee sat a little girl, his niece, a year or two older than the newcomer. Bright golden hair fell in ringlets about her beautiful head, and she had a bright smile for the diffident boy. The scene arose before him again, and he knew that his life had been changed by that smile. Without an effort he recalled all the incidents of his first few months at boarding-school. He saw the house itself with the right-angled piazza, and the huge snow-heap in the bend below, fallen from the two roofs meeting above it—a snow-heap into which he had suddenly been tossed, neck and crop, as he came out on the piazza during the recess of that first day at school — a snow-heap from the feathery mass of which he had to flounder as best he could though it rose high above his head. He saw again, as plainly as though a score of years had not passed, the level parade-ground where

the boys built an Eskimo hut out of snow, a regular igloo, with its tunnel-like entrance through which they crawled on hands and knees to crouch around the fire within to eat doughnuts and crullers and other Dutch goodies. He saw again the long hill down which the boys "went belly-whoppers," coasting into the village. He saw the shop, half-way down, where one might buy the surreptitious dime novel in its yellow cover with the figure of an Indian on the warpath, and where only might be procured a certain sort of lollipop, an unforgettable joy of boyhood never elsewhere discoverable—saccharine globes, brown and striped, and impaled, three or four of them, on the branches of a sassafras twig. He saw again the frozen pond in the woods where he first skated. He heard again the sharp roll of the drum which aroused half a hundred youths to breakfast before their sleep was half complete. He felt again the blows he took

and gave in the weekly fights in which the larger boys made the younger engage every Sunday morning under the gallery of the gymnasium, during the long dull interval between breakfast and church. But what he could most readily recall was the little girl, dark-eyed and golden-haired, imperious and roguish, adored by all the boys, petted by all, and joining in their gentler sports once in a while. Was it not on his sled that she had been pulled to the top of the hill? Was it not with him that she had coasted more often than with any other lad?

Then the winter went, and summer came and was gone, and another winter also; and as Robert Douglas sat silent and staring, the memory of yet another summer passed him, and again he felt the heat of that Fourth-of-July morning. No longer was he at school in a little town on the Hudson—he was at Saratoga, in the ample park of an old hotel since burnt to

the ground. As he alighted from the train and came forward under the noble trees which arched high above his head, and through which the sun played in patches on the cool broad paths, he found before him, just within the wide gates, the little girl on a visit there to her aunt. He was turned of eleven then, and she was not thirteen, as she stood before him with the sunlight sifting through the branches and gilding the refined gold of her hair. His cheeks flamed again as he remembered the shy hesitancy with which he obeyed her aunt's behest and kissed her. The little maid was haughty even then, and she knew her power already; but she was affable, and led him away to show him over the grounds, to point out the tree which she had chosen as her own and to share his torpedoes and fire-crackers. All day long they played together, making many a delightful explosion—faint echoes only of the mighty

battle which had been a-fighting in the next State for three days. Little boy as he was, the news from the field of Gettysburg stirred him, as despatch after despatch was posted on the door of the telegraph-office, where a dense ring of restless men and women were gathered, eager even for the wildest rumors ; although of course he did not then know that the ticking instrument was telling the fate of a nation. When night settled down at last, and the stars came out after he and Miriam had played together all day joyously, there was good news from the front, and cheer after cheer broke from the strained throats of the throng. Then fireworks of surpassing splendor were set off in the grounds among the tall trees. A youthful voice from the piazza started the stalwart chant of " John Brown's Body," and it was taken up instantly by the compact hundreds of men and women. Conscious of excitement and emboldened by the

confusion and the darkness, he tried again to kiss the little girl, but she slipped through his hands and slapped his face. As the man sat alone in his quarters, with the newspaper clinched in his hand, he felt once more the blow which had fallen on the boy's cheek. It was a sweet memory: and a lad's affection feeds on struggle and rebuff. Douglas knew that his love for Miriam had grown with the years, as the boy grew to be a youth.

The days sped and the months; and it was years before Robert and Miriam met again in friendly intimacy. They were in Rome; he was a boy of fifteen, tall enough to think himself well-nigh a man. She was almost seventeen; her aunt's friends had ceased calling her Miriam—she was now Miss De Ruyter. She had been a very pretty child and she had become a beautiful girl; and she delighted in the exercise of her power. Toward Douglas her demeanor varied: more often than not it

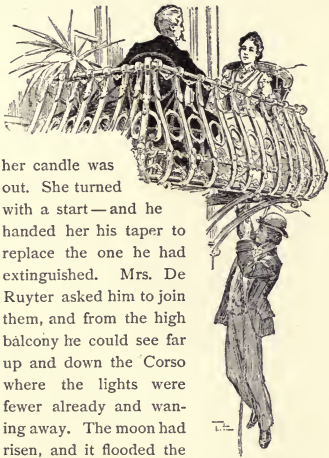
was as imperious as might become a young lady who tolerated an awkward boy. Sometimes she gave no heed to him as she rode her pony to the meet on the Campagna, sitting erect in her saddle, her lithe figure revealed by the tight black habit. Sometimes she was glad to have him with her, and the two young Americans would go forth together to see the wonders of old Rome, rambling through the ruined baths of Caracalla, where the



broken walls, steeped in wintry sunshine, were joyous with the echoing laughter of unthinking youth; or clambering to the top of the mighty dome of St. Peter's, where they brushed against

Papal Zouaves, servants of the church militant, and heard the bugle-calls of the French cavalry who were there to protect the person of Saint Peter's successor.

The last day of the carnival was her last in Rome; it was Shrove-Tuesday; and that evening, after the final race of the riderless horses from the grand-stand in the Piazza del Popolo, came the sport of *mocoletti*. The Corso was dotted with flaring tapers, which came and went like fire-flies. The game was to puff out your neighbor's while keeping your own alight. With a Yankee boy's ingenuity Robert Douglas had made ready a thin rope, tipped by a grapnel, and this he threw up to the side of the balcony where Miriam De Ruyter was talking with old Prince Castellamare. Up the rope he climbed, hand over hand, with his tall taper stuck in his hat, and when his foot was firm on the rail she had not seen him yet. A light puff of his breath over her shoulder, and



her candle was out. She turned with a start — and he handed her his taper to replace the one he had extinguished. Mrs. De Ruyter asked him to join them, and from the high balcony he could see far up and down the Corso where the lights were fewer already and waning away. The moon had risen, and it flooded the street with its molten silver. Robert heard the old Prince tell Mrs. De Ruyter that if

she wished ever again to return to Rome she must go that night to the Fountain of Trevi and drink of the running water by the moonlight. The old lady asked Robert to go with them; and so it was that the boy, who was not yet a man, and the girl, who was almost a woman, stood side by side before the broad basin where the fountain of promise was flashing in the moonbeams, and together they drank the water held in the hollow of their hands. It was then that he had said to her with boyish frankness, "When I am twenty-one, of course, I shall ask you to marry me." She turned sharply and faced him as he stood before her in the moonlight by the trembling water; but she made no reply. The enigmatic look she gave him he could never forget, and for years he pondered its meaning in vain. Before he could speak again, her aunt called her and they drove back to the hotel, and in the morning she was gone. As Robert Doug-

las recalled every incident of that happy evening of youth and hope, he thought that for one of them at least the promise of the Fountain of Trevi had been kept ; although he knew he should never return to Rome she had gone back again to the Eternal City, for joy and for sorrow and for the last time.

It was in Paris that Robert Douglas next met Miriam—it was in Paris, on the day when the empty empire came to nought—on the evening of September 4, 1870. He was standing idle and impassive in the Place Vendôme, where the column of the great Napoleon towered high over the mob which had just spurned forth Napoleon the Little, when he was swept along by the tumult of men and boys, arm in arm, harshly chanting the “Marseillaise,” and exultingly shouting forth the chorus of a popular song of the hour, “Si c’est de la canaille, eh bien, j’en suis !” In the main the mob was good-natured

enough, although the ground-swell of brutal destruction was to be detected even then. After nightfall he stepped almost into the midst of a band of singers on the Boulevard Montmartre, rougher than most of those that had gone before, and more boisterous. The men in blouses were swarming about an open carriage in which sat a frightened old woman and a girl as calm as she was beautiful. Robert knew them at a glance, and he sprang forward to the wheel of the vehicle. "Criez donc 'Vive la République!'" yelled a hoarse-throated and bulky brute almost in the old lady's ear. She sank back on the cushions, trembling violently and with her hands raised to her head. "Mais, certainement!" cried Robert, jumping on the step of the carriage; "we are friends of France—we are Americans of the United States—Vive la République!" Then he gave the driver a sharp word of command, and as the crowd shouted in

response to his cry, the horses plunged ahead and they were clear of the throng. In a moment more they turned into the peace and quiet of a side street. Mrs. De Ruyter was profuse and incoherent in her thanks. Miriam held out her hand, and the pressure of her fingers tingled to his heart.

“The curs!” she said; “they did not dare to rise against the Emperor until he was defeated by the Germans.” All day had Douglas been rejoicing at the downfall of the crowned impostor, but none the less did he feel the heat of this speech. Miriam had shown no sign of trepidation when the violent ruffians were surging about the carriage. With perfect self-possession she had been trying vainly to sustain her aunt and to transfer to the old lady a little of her own fire and strength. Now, as she spoke, there came into her face a look of regal scorn; she had an expression like that of the fair aristocrats as they were going to the guillotine in 1793.

Two days later Robert Douglas aided Mrs. De Ruyter and her niece to quit Paris, and he went with them on one of the last trains to leave the unfortunate city before it was beleaguered by the Prussians. Since then he had not seen Miriam at all—and only twice had he heard from her. When his father, too feeble to battle longer with misfortune, gave up the struggle and laid him down and died, she wrote him first, from London; and hers was no barren epistle of condolence, but a womanly letter, full of feeling, abounding with sympathy. She clasped his hand across the Atlantic. There was a frankness about the letter which was almost affectionate. The words were simple, but behind them there was almost an invitation to speak out. Then, at least, Robert had no right to speak—so he thought. He was poor, and there were debts that he must pay by his labor. She was rich, and used to the society of dukes

and princes. He felt that it would be wrong and selfish for him to ask her to share his garret and his crust. If fortune should smile on him, as he was determined that it must, then he would speak out and empty his heart and lay bare his soul before her. They were young—he was barely twenty-three; they could wait—they *must* wait. At that time it was simply impossible for him to say a word. So he held his peace; he answered her letter, and there the correspondence rested.

For a year or two he did not hear from her again, but he heard about her unceasingly. The newspapers were frequent in praise of her beauty, and they were loud in reporting her success in English society. London correspondents of the American newspapers gave brilliant pen-portraits of her. Her photographs, even, were to be purchased at a shop in Broadway; Robert Douglas, seeing one in the window, had gone in indignantly and

bought them all. One Sunday morning a cable-message in the *Gotham Gazette* announced that she was to marry an English duke: then Robert came near writing again. But before he had made up his mind there followed an authoritative denial. After all, he asked himself, what warrant had he to question? He had no home to offer her. His struggles were as hard as ever, and they were no nearer a triumphant termination. His heart was full of her; he could recall every word of their brief interviews in the past ten years; she beamed on him at the end of his vista of hope. But he said nothing—there was nothing for him to say.

Then, suddenly, one summer day, there came the announcement of her approaching marriage to the young Prince Castellamare, the eldest son of the Prince Castellamare with whom she had been talking on the balcony of the Corso on the night of Shrove-Tuesday, 1867, when

Robert Douglas climbed up to blow out her taper and to offer her his own. As he sat silent in his quarters in the fort in the Far West, with the storm wailing outside, he remembered his effort to disbelieve this rumor and to expect that it would be denied like its predecessors. But by the chill in his heart he knew better. Hope stiffened and froze, as private letters to friends in New York from friends in Europe soon confirmed the public report. The day when Robert first felt the conviction of the truth of the announcement he could not forget—it was a day of torrid heat in the very centre of a New York mid-summer, yet he shivered and his skin shrank as no mid-winter blizzard in the West had ever affected him since. And he burned also on that day as Sahara would not scorch him; and he reeled under the blow like a man with a sun-stroke. By that time he had paid off his father's debts, and it was but a question

of months before he might feel the ground firm under his feet ; all at once the earth trembled under him and opened as if to swallow him up ; of a sudden his incentive was gone ; he had labored for nought.

The newspapers described the beauty of the American bride and extolled the lineage of the Italian bridegroom ; it was a love-match, they said, and not the sordid bargain in which the woman's money was bartered for the man's title. Prince Castellamare was as wealthy as Miss De Ruyter ; he had no need to sell himself ; if he married an American girl it was because he loved her. And if she married him, no doubt, it was because she loved him ; she had had offers as good in England and in Germany, and she had refused them ; she had chosen well, they said moreover, for the prince was a handsome fellow, honest, open-hearted, and charming as only an Italian nobleman may be

nowadays. In due season the wedding-day was fixed and the date was telegraphed under the Atlantic to America, with detailed descriptions of the *trousseau* and the *corbeille*. Robert Douglas sought out a wedding gift: he had a jeweller copy, in gold, the brass button of the military school where first he met her, and in this there was cunningly contrived a space for a tiny watch of exquisite workmanship. He sent her this trinket with a brief wish for her happiness. Then for a few weeks he went about his daily task with a stab at his heart and a hatred of each day as it dawned.

A fortnight after the wedding there came a letter to thank him for the gift, so beautiful and so aptly chosen, and to tell him that she had not forgotten her friends in America, although some of them had almost forgotten her, to judge by their prolonged silence. In conclusion, she wrote to him that, should he ever come to

Rome, she would be very glad to see him—and so would the prince, with whom she had often talked about Mr. Douglas, and who knew that Robert had gone with her when she drank of the waters of the Fountain of Trevi, which had brought her back to Rome.

When he had read this final letter an overwhelming sense of loneliness swept over him. The light had gone out of his life—the hope for which he had lived was dead. There was no use in repining; a strong man does not die of a broken heart. Work there is in plenty in the world for a man to do, if he be but willing. A chance came in his way to steady employment at hard labor with the risk of death—and he snatched at it greedily. The President of the United States had just then the right to appoint a certain number of extra second lieutenants, and by the aid of an old friend of his father's, who was also an old friend of the President's,

Robert Douglas secured one of the commissions. That was why this Christmas found him at Fort Roosevelt, on the plains, in a blizzard. And these were the memories that passed before him as he sat in front of the fire, upright and rigid.

At last he raised the newspaper, still clinched tightly in his fingers, and again he read the paragraph. It was a telegram from Rome, and it told the startling shock given to Italian society by the sudden death of the young Princess Castellamare, formerly Miss Miriam De Ruyter, of New York, one of the many noted beauties of the New World who had married nobles of the Old World. The telegram continued with the assertion that the match between Miss de Ruyter and Prince Castellamare had turned out more happily than most of the international alliances between youth and beauty on one side, and an old title on the other. The Prince and Princess were notoriously de-

voted to each other. The Prince is now inconsolable. The Princess died very unexpectedly. She had been ailing a little for a day or two, but she persisted in going to the costume ball at the Quirinal, where she represented "America," resplendent with diamonds and radiant with youth and beauty. She was forced to go home before the ball was over—and in less than twenty-four hours she lay cold in death. She left no child. Her memory will be pleasantly cherished in the American colony in Rome, where there is abundant testimony to her untiring affability and to her unfailing generosity.

When Robert Douglass had finished re-reading this paragraph of the cable despatch he drew a long breath. Then he folded the newspaper carefully. For a moment he sat with the flat roll in his hand. At last he arose and walked to a corner in the room where a travelling-desk lay on the top of a rough board

table. Lifting the lid of the desk, he put away the newspaper by the side of a little bundle of letters and a packet of photographs. Then he turned away and stood by the window looking out into the welter of the tempest. The mournful moan of the wind sounded in his ears like a solemn requiem. The house shook with the stress of the storm and he rejoiced at it. This war of the elements was in consonance with his feelings.

How long he stood there at the window staring at the storm and marvelling at its might—if, indeed, he saw it at all—he did not know. But he was roused from his reverie by the sudden inroad of the comrade who shared his quarters.

As Paulding Van Dyke broke into the room he cried:

“ If that tenderfoot who didn't know the difference between a Montana chinook and a Dakota blizzard were here now he would find out to-day, pretty dern quick ! ”

Robert Douglas turned slowly, like one awakened from sleep.

"Are you ready?" Van Dyke asked, hurriedly.

"Ready for what?" inquired Douglas.

"Don't you know?" returned Van Dyke. "Two of Pike County Pete's kids are out somewhere in the storm. We must get them in at once, or the poor little devils may be frozen to death."

"How do you know they are lost?" was the question Douglas asked, as he put on his heavy overcoat and placed a flask of brandy in one of its pockets.

"The man you sent down to the cabin this morning with those things you offered, when Lucy told you about the scantiness of their supplies——"

"George Gordon?"

"Yes—he's just back now. It has taken him two hours to get here through the blizzard. And he brings word that Pike County Pete's old woman is almost wild

with fear because the two kids strayed out before the storm began——”

“Then there's no time to lose,” Douglas interrupted. “Have you called the men?”

“I asked for volunteers, and there will be a dozen or more of the boys ready as soon as we are. I told them to get on all their extra coats—this blizzard cuts like a sand-blast.”

Robert Douglas opened the case of a compass, examined it hastily and then put it in the pocket of his great-coat. He lighted two lanterns and gave one to Van Dyke. From the wall he took down a coil of rope, a hundred feet long, with a loop at every ten feet.

Then Douglas and Van Dyke passed out into the quadrangle, where they found a group of soldiers awaiting them. The officers chose nine men. Taking the opposite ends of the rope themselves, they bade the nine men each take a loop. Thus fastened together in a line a hundred feet



long, so that they might sweep the plain, they went forth into the night to rescue two little children.

And as they left the fort behind them, and bore down toward the bank of the river, the storm howled and roared like a strange wild beast starved and resistless with hunger.

A CHARGE FOR FRANCE

BY JOHN HEARD, JR.

With Illustrations by L. Marchetti



I.

DURING his stay in the United States Maurice de Saint Brissac was a great favorite among women ; among men he was correspondingly disliked. The former believed that the mask represented the man, a kind of man they did not often meet among homespun Americans, and to the more romantic he seemed to be a *grand seigneur* of the race Vandyck painted so well, and who had stepped down from his frame in some national gallery to criticise the progress of the world since his day. The latter envied his success, and, because of it, resented the superiority evinced in many ways by this man who was so different from themselves. In a way it soothed their wounded

pride to call him a prig. But he was better than that. He did not believe in the stage business of his time. It was antiquated and often ridiculous. It was insincere. It was very largely "pose." At the same time family traditions, the "honor of the name," the prestige of nobility, combined with wealth, demanded this sacrifice, against which all the finer instincts of the man rebelled. For Saint Brissac was a good man, as good men go nowadays, and a good deal of a man. Had he belonged to the family of Smith, Jones, or Robinson, and been compelled to work for his living, he might have achieved even more than were enough to satisfy himself, and make him one of *the* few Smiths, Joneses, or Robinsons whose success has proved an incentive to subsequent generations of that name. Unfortunately he was reared as a hot-house plant, and he respected the responsibilities of his position too highly to sacrifice

them to a better sense of right and wrong, inherited, at second hand, from a New-England grandmother. Indeed there was in his composition just enough of the old Puritan granite to leaven the enjoyment which might have followed his apparently easy successes in more than one field.

The life of such men is certainly not an enviable one. Their *ego* counts for naught until they are released from the bondage of training, and then it is too late for the natural and healthy development of the man that might have been. Saint Brisac's father admired the type of which M. de Camors is the literary exponent, and, *coûte que coûte*, his son should be such a *parfait gentilhomme*.

Maurice was nearly twenty-two when the old gentleman retired from this stage, and the prison-door was open. He looked out, and to his amazement looked out upon a world of men and women—a species to which he would fain belong,

yet one whose life was incompatible with his training.

"It is a crime," he said to himself; "and I feel like a Chinese woman whose feet have been so long compressed that she cannot walk. I have been brought up for a world that ceased to exist in '89. Shall I go on? *Can I go back?*"

In his *milieu* it was impossible to go back, so he drifted along, taking infinite pains to accomplish, in the most correct manner, many things which he despised. It was nineteenth century to be bad, and he made people believe that he *was* bad. After his emancipation, he travelled through Europe and learned something, viz., that the perfection at which his father aimed, and to which he had endeavored to educate his son, was a very second-rate perfection, entirely out of date, and more often to be condemned than praised. One day this conviction became enough of a certainty to warrant immediate action.

Several young men were writing a collective letter of invitation at the club, and there arose some slight discussion as to the use of the subjunctive.

"I may be wrong, *très cher*," said his contestant, "but Musset's apology is good enough for me. A gentleman should never write French well enough to be mistaken for a professional."

"Our code of honor is written in French," retorted Saint Brissac. "Perhaps you think a gentleman has the same inherited privilege of ignorance in that field."

"The grammar of honor is written in blood, not in ink. Heraldry, sir, is a fine science," replied his opponent.

"Then, if it meet your pleasure," Saint Brissac answered, bowing low, "we will compare arms on a field *vert*, under a bend *azur*."

"What nonsense, what nonsense!" he said to himself, as he left the club. "And

to think that for such absolute inanities two human beings *must* stand against one another, sword in hand, and each endeavor, as a duty, to cut the other's throat. Pshaw !”

The next step was obvious, with the result that Saint Brissac, though one of the best swordsmen in Paris, blundered to the extent of fatally wounding his adversary. Publicly he could not afford to be more than annoyed at his carelessness; at bottom, however, he was sincerely grieved, and made a vow never again to use weapons except in self-defence or in the service of his country; and he then resolved to visit America, where a discussion about spelling did not necessarily involve a funeral.

At the club, as in society, the decision was received with consternation. Maurice made pretty speeches; the *Figaro* repeated them and quoted the admiring answers and comments of that exceed-

ingly self-complacent *coterie* commonly called *Tout Paris*, an epithet which, in their ignorance of foreign idioms, they fondly believe to mean the whole intellectual world. There were farewell dinners of course ; the most brilliant being that given by the Junior Jockey, where Saint Brissac made his last and best speech. To an audience of a certain character the occasion was an impressive one. The majority of the guests still thought of America as their ancestors had thought of Louisiana, and to them Saint Brissac was a modern La Salle. They toasted him, bespeached him, cheered him, mourned him ; and so prone are we to allow our desires the gratification of prettily worded well-wishes run amuck, that he was really moved, despite the more sane criticism of his reason. He went away early, and one of the guests of the evening, a young American, named Joe Sargent, overtook him on the stairs. The men

knew each other slightly, and sauntered together down the rue de Rivoli.

“ Ah! my dear friend,” the Frenchman said, with a sigh, “ it is very hard to say good-by without showing one’s emotions ! ”

There was an amused look in Sargent’s eyes, and for a moment he checked himself. Then turning suddenly, as though the temptation were too great to resist :

“ I should think so,” he answered, smiling. “ But it seems impossible to do so without creating the impression of being either a damned fool or a humbug—at least according to our ideas.”

Saint Brissac stopped and looked up with a puzzled frown into the honest, laughing face a few inches above his own.

“ Well,” he said, after a pause, and holding out his hand, “ it is a new sensation to have the truth told one in that way ; but I believe you meant it right. Indeed I believe you *are* right. I am

going to your country, and it is well I should become accustomed to your ways. I suppose," he continued, interrogatively, "that I shall often hear the truth as frankly expressed?"

"Why," Sargent replied, laughing, "if you are going to the Rocky Mountains, as you said this evening, you will probably hear plenty of plain talk—if that's what you mean. I am on my way there myself for a couple of months' shooting," he added, after a few reflective puffs at his cigar. "Won't you join our party? I might put you up to a thing or two—and, frankly, I think you need it."

To all outward appearances two more dissimilar men never shook hands, yet this dissimilarity was largely one of manner. At bottom they had much in common. Both were men; both were gentlemen, and both believed that whatever a gentleman attempted he should carry out well, and without evident effort. There was

much in the behavior of the one that astonished the other and delighted his sense of humor. But, after all, if the Saxon did occasionally laugh at the Latin, and *vice versa*, they were merely doing as individuals what their respective races had done for centuries, and this did not in any way prevent them from becoming close friends as they came to know each other better.

II.

A YEAR later, in July, 1870, Joe Sargent was seated before the black, empty fireplace in his New York rooms, gloomily pulling at his pipe. The last comic papers and a couple of railroad novels littered the floor around his chair, and before him a large map of Mexico, half on his knees, half on the carpet, concealed a pile of crumpled papers—chiefly notes written on dainty sheets of various tints. It was dusk already, and through the open screened

windows the vulgar noises of the city came up more softly, in jerks, like the last lapping of an ebb-tide ; for the hours of business were over, and the city business of pleasure is dull at midsummer.

In the square below, an Italian organ-grinder was massacring " Santa Lucia " for the twentieth time, and a weary, perfunctory sort of an execution it was. But of all this Sargent was oblivious, as he had been of the more angry, irritating, noon-day street sounds ; and he continued to pull at his brier mechanically, as though it were still alight. In his left hand, that hung over the arm of the chair, he held a flat, Russia-leather case, perhaps a photograph-frame, which he quietly slipped into his pocket as his bell rang.

" Come in ! " he cried out, jumping up and moving a few steps toward the door. " Ah ! Maurice, is it you ? I am glad to see you."

" *Ce cher* Joe ! " the other answered,

running up and embracing him. "I have only just arrived in town, this noon in fact, and heard at the club that you were here. I came at once, as you see; to say *bon jour* first, amuse you for half an hour, and bid you good-by — probably forever."

"Probably forever?"

"Yes; Napoleon has declared war against Bismarck; the news is not known yet, but I have been privately advised, and sail by the next steamer. Joe, what I am going to say will sound very foolish, even unmanly, to you. I know that a great many men come back from the war, but not as many as go into it—except perhaps on the pension-lists; and I have a feeling that I shall be buried on my first battle-field. Don't laugh at me for the presentiment. Under other circumstances I know it would not sound well. But father and son for many generations, in fact, from Agincourt to Inkermann, every

Saint Brissac has died in the field—generally in his first engagement, always in his first campaign.”

“ Well, that’s a fine record,” his friend interrupted. “ *Dulce et decorum, . . .*”

“ To be sure ! ” the other answered, in his usual trenchant way. “ It is an eminently correct sentiment, and proves that the gay poet was a gentleman as well as a philosopher. Give me a cigar, will you, Joe? To tell you the honest truth, *mon ami*,” he continued, after a short pause, and walking slowly from one end of the room to the other, “ I am more deeply moved by the news of this war than I can express to you in words. I have lived in Germany, as you know, and have looked into their military resources — superficially, of course, as an amateur like myself naturally would. But I saw enough to make me feel that France is going to be overwhelmed by one of the most appalling disasters ever recorded in history.

It is that conviction that takes me over there ; for, it goes without saying, I have no great sympathy with the Bonapartists. *We* owe them nothing. But France will need every arm in the Empire, mine among the rest. I tell you, Joe, this declaration of war is the most stupendous of all the follies that have distinguished this glorious Second Empire. It is *Napoléon le Petit*, whose glory is a little moonshine reflected from the sun of Austerlitz, against Bismarck the Great. I wish all Frenchmen had studied and remembered the meaning of Sadowa as well as I have ! However, Joe," he continued, resuming his lighter manner, " all this interests you only as an outsider, and it is puerile of me to talk in this strain. My place is a horse's length ahead of my men. I will not say good-by now, for you must come and see me off—day after to-morrow, at ten in the morning—the Provence. *Au revoir*, then."

After his friend's departure Sargent lighted another pipe and sat down to think. Once or twice he glanced inquiringly at the little leather case, but without opening it. When the pipe was smoked out, he rose with a jump, swept all his letters into a drawer, threw the leather case on top of them all, and turned the key. He glanced at the clock. "By Jove!" he exclaimed, "after nine. I must get a bite of something."

At the club, and while waiting for his dinner, he scribbled down memoranda on the back of the bill of fare, an occupation which he kept up between courses and while smoking his cigar over his coffee. Someone looked in at the door and called out to him.

"Hello, Sargent! Will you join us to-night?" and he made a gesture as though dealing cards.

"Come over here a minute, Durand," he answered. "No, I shall not join you

to-night. I have lots to do. But I'll match you for a dollar."

The coins spun and Sargent lost.

"I thought so!" he said aloud as he stared at the silver piece. "Well, Durand, old man, the devil always get his due—one way or another." He rose, slapped him on the shoulder and laughed bitterly as he left the room while the other said to himself:

"I never saw Sargent drunk before. Something must have gone wrong, surely. I wonder what it was."

A few hours later the big steamer swung clear of the dock, and Saint Brissac stood at the rail scanning the line of waving handkerchiefs through his single eyeglass. Sargent had not appeared, and his friend felt deeply disappointed. Joe was his only American friend—the only person in fact to whom he had confided his intention of sailing. In the promiscuous mob of travellers he seemed to be the sole one

whom nobody had come to bid "God-speed," and he felt both lonely and depressed.

They were in mid-stream now, headed for the ocean, and the Palisades of the Hudson, half-screened by a veil of golden mist, receded gradually into the horizon. The harbor, alive with screaming tugs and ferry-boats, looked its loveliest. The slow quivering of the floating city, freshly painted, and gleaming red, white, black, and gold, in the wet sunlight, lulled one agreeably into a state of poetic contemplation. But on Saint Brissac these soothing influences were lost, and he said to himself, bitterly:

"C'est toujours la même rengaine!
And friendship is the same the world over—a matter of convenience or opportunity—just as love is a matter of juxtaposition. This fellow whom . . ."

Someone touched him on the shoulder, and he turned to look into the pleas-

ant smiling face of the man he was reviling.

"Joe!" he cried out, joyfully, "*C'est toi!*" And somewhat to the edification of the surrounding groups of passengers he embraced him joyfully.

"You were late and got left?" he asked, as they sat down on the wet rail-bench.

Sargent shook his head and held out his brawny right arm. "For France!" he said, smiling.

"Do you really mean it?"

"Why not, Maurice? You said France needed every arm she could get. Well, here is one. What on earth have I got to do in the world? A man cannot always be hunting, or fishing, or travelling, dining at the club, and going to the theatre."

"Or into society?"

"Isn't it much the same thing?"

It was so unlike Sargent to make a remark that smacked ever so little of bitter-

ness that Saint Brissac looked up quickly, and before his sharp, intelligent scrutiny the other turned away with an awkward smile. After a moment of silence the Frenchman laid his hand on Sargent's arm, and said, very gently, in a voice that expressed his sympathy more perfectly than could any words :

"An arm for France, . . . Joe? France is sometimes typified by an eagle, sometimes by a flag, and sometimes by a goddess. There is always a woman in the case."

Sargent made no answer, and neither again alluded to the subject.

III.

A FEW weeks later, on the morning of the famous 6th of August, the two friends were riding side by side through the cool, green shade of the Haguenau forest. In their search for General Duhesme they

had passed around the extreme right of the French army and were continuing their quest in a somewhat aimless way through a country already occupied by the enemy. Now and then, as they peered into the green depths of foliage, they caught the glint of a rifle-barrel and a glimpse of a *franc-tireur's* blouse. Sometimes the color of their amaranth breeches, for they wore undress staff uniform, seemed to reassure their would-be slayer, and he stepped on to the road to ask what might be the news of the day; and in turn they asked information as to their way. Positive advice they never received. "It might be this, it might be that, . . . but again—" and everywhere they were confronted by the fatal ignorance of facts and places, which contributed as much as any other cause to the misfortunes culminating at Sedan.

The shadow of impending disaster lay heavy on the land, and the nearer they

approached the seat of war, the darker it grew.

In Paris all was confusion. A hundred conflicting despatches were received daily at the War Department, but only the most encouraging were sent out for publication. The probability of an invasion had never been contemplated, and all the plans of the French were drawn up on the basis of a march to Berlin. A defensive campaign was such an improbability that the French had never considered it as a possible contingency. The classes in Paris knew enough to be anxious, but the masses interpreted such news as was doled out to them according to their own desires, and studied the map of Germany with pathetic ignorance. Many a *concierge* and his wife invested a few laboriously saved francs in a large map of Prussia, and planted red-headed pins where they believed their son ought now to be. Wissembourg had not been fought, and in the story of the first

skirmishes the facts had been colored with more than poetical license. The axiom of the day was simply that France was invincible. Hence, if a battle had been fought, the enemy must have been routed; if not routed, at least defeated; if not defeated, and this interpretation of the news was improbably conservative, the Prussians had been checked. Such a neutral result aroused the contempt of the disputatious plebs. In the *cafés*, in the *brasseries*, on extemporized platforms, the long down-trampled hydra of republicanism raised its heads, snarled loudly, angrily, at the evident degeneracy of the French army, and predicted—nay, clamored for—the fall of the Empire. And they builded better than they knew, for the *dégringolade* was at hand.

Arriving in the midst of such confusion, Saint Brissac had experienced no difficulty in securing a pass for his friend Sargent's American weapons and ammunition; still

less in obtaining for both a staff appointment at large, which would allow them to choose their own fighting ground. This was totally at variance with any existing army regulations, but Saint Brissac had such influential friends that the favors he requested were conferred with a celerity that implied a fear of non-acceptance on his part. Good men seemed suddenly to have become scarce in France.

On the eve of their departure from Paris Saint Brissac went up to Sargent's room and brought him his uniform. Joe looked up from the map he was studying and noticed that his friend was very pale.

"Any news?" he asked, in his characteristically careless way.

"Yes; we start at eight in the morning; staff officers. I'll tell you about it on the way," Saint Brissac answered. Then he added, after a pause, during which he nervously paced the room: "The enemy is in France. But, Joe, I

suppose you cannot understand what that means to me."

Sargent replied phlegmatically: "Well, if the enemy is in France, the next thing to do is to drive him out." As he raised his eyes he was struck with the expression of anguish on Saint Brissac's face. "Come, Maurice," he said, rising and laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "things always seem worse on the day before. When we are out there and get to work, you'll see everything in a different light. Brace up, old man! If it comes to the worst, why, we can continue this little trip together, shoulder to shoulder, away into the happy hunting-grounds."

"What a blessing you are, Joe," the other answered, suddenly smiling and looking up at the square, rugged face of his companion. "The indifference and carelessness which we learn to assume are perfectly natural to you; and what a difference there is between the genuine and

the imitation article! I assure you it does me more good to listen to you for five minutes than to spend an hour at the War Department and hear the—I suppose you would call it hurrahing—of a lot of men, clever men too, who are trying to hide the truth behind a screen of traditional conventionalities and phrases. Have you ever seen any fighting, Joe?”

“You would hardly call it fighting, I suppose,” Sargent answered, laughing. “I served through a couple of Apache campaigns, for the fun of it, and so I do know what a bullet sounds like when it passes an inch or two away—and that is a trick those Apache bullets have. I guess I’ll do well enough, Maurice, because,” he continued, with a drop in his voice, “because as far as I am concerned I don’t care a d— how it all turns out. In a tight corner it helps a man to know that he has no family responsibilities; no letters to read over at the last minute, and

all that sort of thing. Johnny Steens, who, by the way, was killed in one of our brushes with the Indians, used to say that he should prefer to start out as a foundling, with just money enough to make a start as a Gil Blas or some such *picaro*. I guess there is something in that. A fellow could afford to take big chances then and have lots of fun. Well, you say we're off in the morning, eh? Suppose, then, we quit swapping lies and get ready."

Their journey from Paris to the front was a horrible nightmare to Saint Bris-sac; a stern disillusion to Sargent. For, though he modestly alluded to his campaigns in Arizona and Sonora as mere hunting trips, he had there received such training and such correct critical insight as well-organized campaigns often fail to give. It was apparent to him that disorder was everywhere the order of the day; confusion and ignorance the watch-

words. Saint Brissac bit his mustache in despair. Joe smoked grimly ; but neither spoke. They understood each other and there was nothing to say.

The morning was well-nigh noon before they found the old general, seated under a tree on a knoll overlooking a part of the battle-field. In a little hollow behind, the Eighth and Ninth Cuirassiers stood dismounted by their horses, and still further back two squadrons of the Sixth Lancers halted at ease. A mile and a half away the picturesque little village of Morsbronn lay across the plain, like a brown lizard, quivering in the intense heat. To the left the deep booming of the artillery alternated with the sharp, snarling tattoo of the musketry. The distant clumps of woods were cushioned with rounded clouds of smoke that dissolved slowly, and hung in shreds across the tree-tops. Here and there, through the fields of hops, broken black lines advanced and patches

of red receded. Fifty thousand Frenchmen were losing a battle against one hundred and eighty thousand Germans. But the fight was yet only at its height, and, though the result was a foregone conclusion, the defeated were not yet beaten, nor the conquerors victorious.

Just outside of the circle of staff officers Saint Brissac and Sargent dismounted, threw their reins to an orderly, and stepped up to where the general stood.

"Do you bring orders?" he asked, without taking his field-glass from his eyes.

"No, sir; we come to take them," Saint Brissac answered, as he handed a letter to the general.

"Why, Maurice, is it you?" the old gentleman exclaimed as he wrung the soldier's hand. "How glad I am to see you! What can I do for you?"

"My friend Mr. Sargent and I, general, crave the honor of a charge with you."



"Charge?" the old soldier answered, testily. "Who the devil told you we were going to charge?"

"Excuse me, general. What else were cuirassiers made for?"

"Quite right, my boy, quite right. It was so up to Waterloo; but everything seems to be wrong to-day. Later, perhaps we may have the pleasure of doing our duty." Then calling to his chief staff officer he said to him, "These gentlemen will ride with the Eighth."

"In what capacity, general?"

"Privates," answered Saint Brissac, promptly.

The general waved his hand in acquiescence and said kindly: "*Nous nous reverrons—peut-être!*"

As they were about to move away a couple of bullets sang through the trees above them, and their attention was drawn to a group of Prussians emerging from an apple orchard about six hundred

yards away. A mounted officer, a few steps ahead of his men, examined the French through his glasses and directed the fire of the sharpshooters. Somewhat to the contemptuous astonishment of the French officers Sargent had dropped behind a rock as the first bullet pinged above him, and a second later the sharp, stinging report of his 45-90 rang out twice. When the smoke had cleared they saw a riderless horse galloping away, and before the suddenly deserted orchard wall two dark things lying on the road. Sargent had raised himself on one knee and was quietly replacing his two spent cartridges.

“*Mâtin!* Monsieur Sargent,” the general exclaimed. “You do not speak often, but, when you do, your words are to the point!”

Joe laughed as he straightened himself, still cautiously scanning the woods ahead. “If those fellows had been Apaches, general,” he said in his frank, familiar way,

“you would be snug behind that tree-trunk, or a dead man in front of it, and I wouldn't be such a fool as to stand out of the shadow of that rock for better than half an hour.”

“*Voyez-vous cela!*” exclaimed one of the officers. “*Ces Américains sont impayables!*”

“I bet, general,” interrupted Saint Brissac, “you thought he was afraid when he dropped like the ace of clubs behind that rock. 'Pon my honor, if I hadn't seen him at work after big game I'd have thought so myself.”

Duhesme was looking approvingly at Sargent's large, careleſs figure. “I shall never think so again,” he said, quietly. “Now, gentlemen, to your posts! Monsieur de Satory will look after you. Ah! Satory! one moment, please,” he added, as they moved away. “Put that young Goliath somewhere near the flag.”

In the little ravine below, the men were

listening anxiously to the rumbling of the battle. Half-way between them and the group of staff officers an old bugler, erect on his white horse, waited eagerly for orders. Now and then a lost shell dropped among the compact crowd and created a momentary confusion. Then the wounded were carried away, and the dead laid against the green bank, face upward, gazing, with sightless eyes at the blue eternity above. On the edge of the road a few frightened peasants leaned on their shovels and gaped, open-mouthed, at the magnificent soldiers before them. As long as there remained such men to fight for her, France—and they—must be safe.

From time to time a false alarm caused a passing flurry in this mass of iron-clad men, as would a breeze rippling through a grove of poplars. The troopers cursed under their breath, the officers grumbled, and then all dropped back again into a semblance of apathy. But nevertheless

the suspense was intolerable, and even the steadiest trembled with suppressed excitement.

As de Satory, Saint Brissac, and Sargent came toward them the soldiers moved nearer to their horses, ready to mount, and a couple of officers rode forward to meet them.

"Well, at last?" they cried out.

"No, there is nothing!" Satory answered, curtly. "Here, put those dead men underground, with each a sword-handle for a cross. Take off their armor. These gentlemen will charge with the Eighth and need accoutrements. Get those peasants to work, and sent Captain Moirac to me at once. Captain," he continued, as that officer rode up, "I present you Mr. Sargent, an American, and the Comte de Saint Brissac. They will ride next to the flag-bearer. The general requests that they be properly armed."

"Saint Brissac here!" the captain ex-

claimed, holding out his hand. "I thought you were in America. It is delightful to see you again . . . gambling as usual ; . . . it is *rouge et noir* this deal, preceded by a little *picquet*, . . ."

"*Parbleu!*" answered Maurice, in the same light-hearted tone; "we lead hearts!"

"Good! against the clubs of Prussia and the diamonds of Bavaria."

"But black will take the stake," broke in de Satory. "Mark my words, gentlemen, spades will cover hearts and diamonds and clubs alike; spades will be trumps this evening," he repeated, riding away.

"Our friend is lugubrious," cried Saint Brissac, laughing, as he watched the other moving off.

"And no wonder," remarked a young lieutenant who had joined the party; "we have not had a decent bottle of wine for ten days."

Accoutred in dead men's armor the friends waited in the saddle on either side of the stalwart flag-bearer. The lines were not very straight, and whenever a shell dropped among them they swung to and fro, or fronted about to make room for the dismal processions of dead or wounded that passed between them to the rear. The horses fretted and champed their bits; the men played with their swords and cursed at their enforced inactivity. All around, the deafening din of the battle swayed back and forth, now fainter, now louder, as the breeze blew this way or that; and yet no news, no orders, reached them. Then suddenly the firing seemed to grow more brisk on the right.

Saint Brissac leaned forward and listened. "It will be our turn soon," he said, and, leaning over, he held out a blank sealed package to Sargent. "If I don't come back, Joe," he asked, "will you deliver this in person?"

Sargent nodded, and put the envelope away. In the nervous, excited throng he was the coolest man present. His training in the desert, where, of all places, patience is a virtue, now stood him in good stead. While other men jumped on and off their horses, he sat so perfectly still and apparently unmoved that the veteran flag-bearer said to him :

“ You have seen much service, monsieur ? ”

“ It is my first battle,” Joe answered, quietly.

“ Well, young man,” the other replied, “ my compliments to you ! You will go far. It seems hardly right to intrust the flag to a foreigner, but, if I fall, you take it. There isn't a man of your size in the regiment.”

Suddenly, shrill and clear, the bugle sounded the *Garde à vous*, and a tremor shook the two regiments. The swearing and grumbling ceased, and a dead silence

seemed to fall on the ranks. The men swung themselves into the saddle, reined their horses into line, and waited. A few officers galloped along the front, an order passed down the line, and the mounted iron-breasted mass moved forward out of the shadow into the sun. As of their own accord the squadrons deployed and again waited. A staff officer rode down the front and waved his *képi*.

“Boys!” he cried, “the country needs you. You are going to charge. Ahead of you are ten thousand bayonets, glory, and death. Behind you, our shattered right wing. You must save them, cost what it may. Good-by, boys! Go it as your fathers did at Waterloo!”

A voice answered from the ranks, “All right, general! We haven’t forgotten how the old fellows charged.” The next moment the hoarse cry of *Vive la France!* rang from twelve hundred throats.

And then again there was a pause.

Several horsemen wheeled into place in their respective positions. A half-intelligible order rippled through the ranks. The bugle sounded. The lines oscillated, and instinctively the squadrons chose their ground. The front moved ahead, and the long diagonal shrank into column. Then again they halted for a moment, and the first bullets, fired from too great a distance to do any harm, rang against the steel cuirasses with a dull, swinging, melancholy sound.

Saint Brissac reached over and shook Sargent's hand — and they were off. Twelve hundred swords flashed from their scabbards and cast a bar sinister of shadow across the golden shield of the burnished cuirasses ; and the long horse-tails streamed out behind the star of light that sat upon each man's helmet.

The ground was very bad — sunken roads between high embankments ; stone walls, orchards, and hop fields, crowded

with sharpshooters. But more terrible than all were the eight batteries of Gunstett sending their irresistible death-ploughs through the gallant, galloping mass of cannon-meat. From the right, from the left, from the front, sheets of leaden hail swirled, and whisked, and whistled, and shrieked at them, sinking into the quivering flesh with a dull, sodden sound, puncturing helmet and cuirass alike to deliver their direct death-message ; or, coming aslant, brushing over the keen blades, were shattered into angry, fluid fragments against the bright armor that gave forth a curiously muffled ring. The ranks opened and closed again with that ghastly lozenge-shaped motion that means death or suffering, a tomb or a wound, for each divergence. And, strange to say, not a human, not a living sound was heard. The rumble of the clattering hoofs, the sombre drumming accompaniment of the musketry, the harsh clang-clanging of

the lead pouring in fierce gusts on the advancing line of steel, the deep bass rolling of the heavy guns, drowned all animate sounds. No death-cries were heard; the wounded fell dumb; no horses neighed; no riders yelled. Twelve hundred started; eleven — ten — eight — six — four hundred reached the village. Into it, into it, flags ahead! like a human torrent, the quarters of the horses dancing a staccato death-dance cadence like the crested flow of a rushing stream, rising and falling and disappearing; rising and falling again, and falling, as a torrent, smoothing itself out into a bank of rapids. And at the end of the long, crooked street, suddenly, a barricade and a human whirlpool! From above, from every roof and window and balcony and shutter the death-hail rattles down. And again a lull; a vision of dismounted men tearing away at the dam; and once more released the stream rushes on with a bound into the great orchard beyond.

In such a race there are no incidents, no personalities. A man is as a drop of water, a human atom whirled along by a rushing current and emptied out beyond, dizzy and half-stunned. Four hundred had reached the village; sixty rode out of it. In his left hand Saint Brissac grasped the flag, in his right a broken sword. Beside him Sargent, whose helmet had been shot off, was binding a handkerchief around his forehead. Six cuirassiers, panting and mostly wounded, sat on their horses behind them; and that was all. The main body had diverged to the south and left these eight men stranded on a little knoll, a stone's throw from the road. How they reached it, why they remained on it, not one of them understood.

Sargent looked around and laughed hysterically. "I feel as though I had been through the rapids at Niagara," he said. "How long do you suppose that business

lasted, Maurice! Hullo! where did you get that flag?"

"I'm sure I couldn't tell you, Joe. Are you hurt?"

"Not to speak of. By Jove! here is my flask, full and unbroken. Here's luck for you! Let's have a nip all around; I guess we've earned it. There, that's good; now, what's the next thing to do?"

"*Ma foi, mon capitaine,*" cried out one of the men, "just look around you! there's nothing left but to die!"

"Well," Sargent answered, good-humoredly, "after what we have been through that don't seem quite as easy as it looks. Come; jump off your horses, boys, and unsling your carbines. There are a couple of dead fellows in that ditch who'll fix us out with cartridges. Why, Maurice, old man, you look played out; what's the matter? There's plenty of fight in us yet. Cheer up, boys! If we've got to die, let us die like good men!"

And here the difference of character of the two men showed itself. In the attack the reckless, dashing young Frenchman led the way, fearless, undaunted, always in the front rank. But now that the battle was lost, and the fight had become a purely defensive one—a pushing way of death as it were—his grip was gone, and the solid, staying qualities of the New Englander came out in strong contrast. The men at once recognized him as their leader, and whether by influence of the brandy, or of his cheeriness, they buckled heartily to the task before them. Sargent understood this as well as they, and acted accordingly.

“Tear the silk off that staff, Maurice, and put it inside your jacket. We must not lose the flag. Now, boys, look to your arms again; it is time for those pork-eaters to be at us—and here they come, sure enough! Lie low, boys, and aim quietly, each mark his man!”

A moment later a volley crashed over them.

“On to your horses and charge!” Sargent yelled—and it seemed that his words had barely died away before they were back again—three men, Saint Brissac, and Sargent. “My God, Maurice,” the latter said, “I haven’t a cartridge left.”

“Nor I,” the other answered, doggedly. The men shared with them and they waited. They were too weak to charge again, but stood gallantly at bay. Three times the little band repulsed their assailants until all their ammunition was exhausted; and again they waited. The black uniforms were all around them.

Then some hussars came forward and Sargent rode out alone, a bloody handkerchief around his forehead, and his long, straight blade before him. The German officer advanced and gruffly demanded their surrender.

“Come and take us!” was the quiet

answer; and Joe urged his horse onward. The soldier laughed and cocked his pistol. "Another step, my friend, and you are carrion." But Sargent still moved toward him. Sabre and pistol flashed at the same moment; and Joe disengaged himself from his fallen horse, the hussar dropped out of his saddle on to the grass, and the little band cheered, as even desperate men will do when they see a brave deed nobly done. Even the Germans seemed ashamed to attack again. After a few moments of deliberation another officer rode forward, with a handkerchief on the end of his sword, and Sargent met him half-way.

"Will you surrender?" he asked, courteously. "You have done all that brave men can do. You know the laws of war—we shall have to close in on you, and if you do not surrender, . . . well, you know what must happen as well as I do. . . . Think on it a moment, sir. You

have no ammunition, no chance of escape. You are alone in the midst of our army. Surrender is the only course open to you."

Sargent glanced around, and, to his amazement, he saw the four cuirassiers mounted, and in line, erect as on parade. Three of them held their broken swords, presenting arms. A step to the front, his shattered right arm limp by his side, with head thrown back and chest expanded, the bugler was playing the grand old hymn :

Mourir pour la patrie,
C'est le sort le plus beau,
Le plus digne d'envie. . . .

And as the notes sprang from the dented instrument, pathetically broken and husky, the men straightened themselves in their saddles. "Perfectly insane!" Sargent said to himself; "but it is devilish fine all the same;" and turning to the Prussian officer he added, with a

wave of the hand toward the little group he commanded :

“ You see, sir, surrender is out of the question. I must go back to them.” The officer raised his cap in token of admiration, and Sargent walked slowly back to his men.

For a moment the enemy seemed embarrassed. Had they been Anglo-Saxons they would have given those five heroes a rousing cheer ; but being merely Saxons the folly of the action outweighed its grandeur. Before the generous officer could prevent it, a last volley was poured into the little clump of human wreckage that had drifted and hung on that fatal knoll. It seemed more like an execution than a fight, and for a few seconds the assailants held back waiting for the smoke to clear.

By some miracle Sargent had not been touched. Looming up through the mist of smoke they saw his giant figure rise



from the grass, on to which he had flung himself, saw him snap his sword across his knee and hurl the fragments at them, watched him bend over the body of his dying friend and raise it with tender care in his mighty arms, as a mother might bear her child, and slowly walk down toward them with his burden, their bloody work.

On either side the ranks parted in solemn silence as he passed between them, and so great was the prestige that enmantled the solitary survivor that instinctively the officers saluted as he walked down the line to the road. There, unconscious of his surroundings, he turned toward the village. A large body of staff officers had gathered on a little eminence near by, whence they had watched the last phases of the fight, and as the big cuirassier passed, bearing in his arms the body of his comrade the commanding general rode forward.

Without realizing to whom he was speaking, Sargent looked up and asked, in his simple, quiet way: "Can you tell me, sir, where I shall find some water? I am afraid my friend is dying."

There was something so gentle, so absolutely oblivious of self, in the stalwart young fellow's manner that the veteran's eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"Your poor boy," he said, kindly, "he is not dying—he is dead."

"Dead?"

At that moment a burly Rittmeister rushed from the ranks and hit Sargent on the shoulder. "You — French dog of a prisoner," he said, "how dare you speak to a general. Come off here with your carrion."

"*Kreuz Granaten Donner Keil!*" the old general fairly yelled, as he smote the brute across the back with the flat of his sword. "Get back to the ranks, you hound!"

Sargent had not even noticed the incident. "Are you sure, sir, that he is dead?" he asked, in a hopeless, cruelly quiet voice.

The other merely nodded, and side by side they went down the road a little way, without apparent object, while the men made way for them to right and left. Presently they passed a group of sappers, and the sight of their picks and shovels seemed to rouse Sargent from his apathy. He stopped and looked up again.

"May I bury him, sir?" he asked, in the same dull voice.

The general gave some orders, and a few men fell to digging a hole under a gnarled old apple-tree. When they were done, Sargent bent forward and laid his friend down; and they covered him in silence. After it was over he planted the broken sword above his head and kneeled by the rough little mound. He was vaguely conscious of the necessity of a

prayer, but for all his efforts he could think of none but the little jingle we have all babbled as children at our mother's bedside. So, folding his hands, he repeated, slowly, the old familiar verses :

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

Then his voice broke, and he stopped. The white-haired old general removed his cap and muttered between his teeth, as the other officers present uncovered at his example, "A strong hand and a tender heart. If my Fritz had lived I wish he had grown to be like you!" Then there was a long, awkward silence. Sargent rose and looked around. For the first time since the last volley was fired he realized where he was, and recognized the rank of the officer beside him. By way of apology for the liberties he felt he must have taken, he bowed low, then drew himself up.

“General,” he said, quietly, “where shall I join my fellow-prisoners?”

IV.

A FEW months later Sargent arrived in New York. The long, dreary period of captivity was over, and once more he was a free man; for although he might have availed himself of his commission as staff officer, and been liberated on parole, he preferred to take his full punishment alongside of the men with whom, as a private, he had ridden, verily, into the jaws of death. At the frontier he opened the sealed package intrusted to him by Saint Brissac just before the charge, and his heart stood still as he read the address of the enclosed letter: “To Miss Edith Thomas.” She was the girl he loved, the girl who had rejected him. It was all clear to him then; she had loved Saint Brissac—possibly they were engaged—

and of all men in the world he had been chosen for the solemn duty of breaking the news of his friend's death to her. For, of course, the official despatches had never mentioned the names of the two volunteers. "Poor girl," he said to himself, and laughed. "She wrecked my happiness, and now I am obliged to do the same to her. It is indeed a bitter world."

The steamer arrived in the morning, and he called in the afternoon. As he walked up Fifth Avenue none of his former friends recognized him, for indeed he had grown very brown and gaunt during the long months of privation when he worked as a day-laborer in the German prison. Then the broad scar across his forehead had changed the frank, boyish expression of his face, so that, although many stared at him in an undecided sort of way, as he made no sign of recognition no one spoke to him.

Miss Thomas was alone, for he had come early, and in the somewhat gloomy, conventional room, furnished according to the most expensive New York taste, Sargent felt ill at ease. It was as though the prison walls he had barely left again enclosed him. They shook hands rather stiffly, and Joe retreated to the mantel-piece; from there he could retreat no further and must advance.

"And where have you been, pray, during the last year, Mr. Sargent?" she asked, with an assumption of light-heartedness.

"On a serious errand, Miss Thomas," he answered, much embarrassed. "I was in France with M. de Saint Brissac during the campaign; and—and afterward, alone, . . . in Germany, a prisoner. And . . . please take this; . . . he gave it to me just before the charge where . . . where we were all killed . . . I mean——" Then he handed

the letter to her, strode to the window, and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief.

A few minutes passed in silence before she called to him.

Apparently she had not moved; he glanced up furtively at her face and saw that she had been weeping.

"Tell me about it," she said, gently, holding the letter in her clasped hands. And the poor boy did. He told how Saint Brissac had left at once for France on receipt of the bad news; of his energy in Paris; of his suffering at the disaster which he felt must overwhelm his country; of his valiant charge, always in the front rank; of his gay and gallant behavior throughout; of his brave death; of his gloriously simple funeral before the enemy's host. He glorified his friend, and in doing so before the woman he believed that friend had loved, he grew enthusiastic and eloquent. While he talked he did not

dare look up at her, but he heard her sobbing softly and his heart yearned with sympathy for her and bled with grief for his brilliant friend—for he remembered now—ah so distinctly! that last glimpse of him, erect and undaunted in the face of death.

But when he had finished a horrible feeling of nothingness came over him. His last duty was done, and life seemed to him like a deserted race-course.

“Well,” he said, rising, after a pause, “I think I must go,” and he looked up.

The girl had also risen from her chair and was holding Maurice's letter toward him.

“Am I to read it?” he asked. “Thank you.”

It was short, but characteristic, and ran thus:

“**MADemoiselle**: I regret that our very slight and formal acquaintance compels me to apologize for the liberty of

addressing you. Nor would I dare, mademoiselle, to do so were it not for the knowledge that if this letter reaches your hands I shall no longer be of this world. I intrust it to one of the bravest, the noblest, the most unselfish, the most loving of men—my friend Joe Sargent. Ah, mademoiselle, can I say more? May your noble heart teach you to read between the lines of your admiring and devoted servant,

“CHARLES MAURICE,
Comte de Saint Brissac.”

“Why, . . . but what does it all mean?” Sargent exclaimed as he looked up from the paper at the graceful girl before him. I thought he . . . you. . . .”

“Ah, Joe,” she interrupted, blushing bewitchingly, and smiling at him through her tears. “Joe, can't *you* read between the lines?”



SERGEANT GORE

BY LEROY ARMSTRONG

With Illustrations by W. L. Metcalf



ENLISTED men in the regular army do not indulge in much courting of any kind. These sons of Mars who hold the outworks of the realm are not often afforded an opportunity to court even danger. Fame, that is supposed to lurk in cannons' mouths, there to be sought by aspiring young gentlemen who make a living by the extinguishment of other aspiring young gentlemen, is a thing so rarely heard about in the army of the United States that sluggish blood, tamed by some drill and much fatigue, is never moved to deeds of daring. Fortune is, if possible, farther away than promotion, for the legions are not munificently rewarded, and the soldier who can loan money is a personage certain of distinction.

And as for courtship which involves a

gentler, fairer sex, that is quite out of the question. At their quarters, in the tedium of walking post, and on the long rides down the valley when "mounted pass" rewards good conduct, some of the men may cherish these dreams of fair women, but they always set the season of their felicity far in the future—when captivity shall have been turned to freedom.

But now and then even the ignoble recruit in the regular army finds an object about which he may moan and dream. It may not be a face or figure that would inspire great deeds in those who have more frequent views of women; but beauty is a matter of comparisons. The "handsomest woman in the valley" wears a diadem as dear to her as that which graces the "loveliest lady in the city."

Fort Bidwell had but one unmarried woman in the whole confines of the reservation, and she was a half-Spanish maiden who attended the commanding officer's



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children. Her father had been an army officer, who consoled himself for assignment to Fort Yuma by marrying the belle of the region—a territory that is even yet far more Castilian than Saxon. Judged by all canons of beauty Terita was not handsome. She was short and dark, low-browed, and gifted with a mouth of most generous extent; but then, she was young, her hands and feet were small and shapely, her eyes were deep and dark, and she had her mother's very witchery of dress. Seen beside the wives of the officers, Terita suffered somewhat; but then no soldier ever saw her there. To them she was ever alone and unshamed by comparisons.

When she wheeled the colonel's children down the esplanade of an afternoon—the time of all times when an American camp is lazy—the men would vie with each other in attentions. True, they could not do much, and the first man at

her side, if not dislodged by Terita's frowns, was master of the situation.

But the sun shone brightly on the esplanade all the afternoon, while just across the creek which formed one boundary of the parade-ground was a level stretch of grass that lay like a carpet right up to the foot of a massive, towering wall of granite. The time-honored excuse for accosting the maid was to assist her and the children across this brook on a series of stepping-stones—so much more desirable than any bridge could have been. Once over, the commonest kind of courtesy demanded that Terita permit her adorer to walk up and down with her, to fill the admiring, envious eyes of all the garrison, and to win the colonel's graces no less than the girl's, by preventing any of the little blunderers from falling in the brook.

It was, indeed, to the rank and file, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Of course, all this implied a well-dressed soldier, the patient buffing of buttons, the polishing of shoes, and the tact to simply happen on the esplanade—not rush there as though this were the one thing which could make a man tidy and agreeable. And while four out of every five men in the fort would have given a month's pay any time to walk and talk with her, to touch her hand at chance intervals, and to wake that merry Southern laugh, not nearly that proportion cared to give the time and trouble necessary ; and a still smaller number was prepared to march out there and run the risk of impalement on that keen glance, not to mention the ridicule such a fate would involve when one returned to the squad-room.

Yet the strife for her smiles was warm enough, and several shared with some approach to equality the honor of attending Terita, though not one of them could ex-

pect she would dismiss the others, and keep herself for him only. But the girl was rapidly developing a stronger liking for Sergeant Gore than for anybody else. He was so handsome, so at ease ; his blue eyes shone with such a light, and his soft, white hands were so caressingly tender when they touched her own.

He was so faultlessly dressed, and was so plainly accustomed some time in the past to even better company than hers, that Terita always greeted him with a surer welcome, walked with him longer, and was plainly happier with him than with the other men. And so it came to pass when rival admirers outwitted Sergeant Gore and gained the coveted position, she grew to inquiring about that young man ; grew to speak of his dress, his learning, his better past. All this was gall and wormwood to the gallants who heard it, and one by one they read dismissal in the queries, and left the field to Gore.

He was not the only man of good family whom Dame Fortune, in a perverse mood, had sent to the ranks of the regular army; he was one of many. But his face and figure, no less than his family-tree, were his title-deeds of nobility. Sergeant Gore's weekly letter from his Philadelphia home had long been one of the events at the squad-rooms in Bidwell. A chosen few might listen to some passages. A somewhat larger circle had seen the photographs of mother and sisters, and knew the home-life of the Gores was one to envy. They paid him their highest compliment by being interested in that fairer half of life, and asking respectfully, when the quarters were stillest, about those from whom his honor kept him alien.

During the Modoc war young Billy Somers, just out of a civilian college at the East, dared the rigors of a campaign in the lava beds, quartering himself on

his brother, the first lieutenant of Company G, First Cavalry. When Captain Jack and his three unclean abettors were hanged at Klamath for defying the flag and slaying the men who bore it, young William asked for a commission in the army. The officers in general endorsed his application, for he was an uncommonly agreeable fellow, and all declared his deserts firmly grounded on "brave and meritorious conduct in the Modoc war."

Pending the action of the Secretary of War the young man paid a visit to his friends in San Francisco, and then, as the unfruitful months vanished, he came to Bidwell and again accepted the hospitality of his brother. He found a comfortable seat on the broad balcony of Lieutenant Somers's quarters, and there smoked good "conchas" and watched the golden afternoons drift by.

He saw Terita, and being almost an officer, if not already crowned with a com-



mission, he needed no introduction, and, indeed, very little formality of any kind, to claim her acquaintance. The girl was flattered by his attentions, although the more surely he was an officer the smaller the chance for any union. But he found many pretexts for being with her. When his commission should come he might be

assigned to some post in the South, and his Spanish was in woful need of dressing. And she—well, she was a woman, and not averse to compliment.

The children were seldom lifted across the creek now. Terita said the esplanade was good enough. And she could not encourage Sergeant Gore to walk with her there, where every turn brought them under Lieutenant Somers's balcony. Yet she did love him. She wept in secret many times, vexed that fate gave her a choice so grievous; and she was often very good to Gore, though he, poor fellow, would come back to quarters with not enough of reason left to distinguish between a daily detail and a death sentence.

But at last the commons triumphed. Billy Somers's commission didn't come; maybe it never would. She fed the hope and let her heart follow its stronger bending. Gore was in ecstasies. He had less

than a year to serve, and then an honorable discharge would restore him, somewhat like the prodigal son, to a father's house where there was plenty.

Terita slipped from her room one night and met her lover on the grassy walk beyond the creek. They strolled up and down there in the moonlight, busy with pictures that are never unveiled but once in all the world. Gore wore his finest uniform, and strapped to his side, lifted from clanking against his spurs, was his burnished sabre, for he was sergeant of the guard to-day.

Why will a woman love the tools of war? What is there in a sword to fire her with devotion for the wight who carries it? No one knows, yet that has been her weakness since Æneas won the heart of Dido.

The mail had arrived to-day, and its chief treasure, his letter from home, was recited at length to the fairy by his side.

Terita listened and clung to this handsome fellow; she stroked his massive arm, she touched his face, she sang him songs of love in the soft Spanish of her mother-tongue—and she turned like a panther when a man came quickly around the base of the great rock and approached her lover threateningly.

It was Billy Somers.

“Go to the guard-house, Gore,” he said. “You have no business here.”

But the sergeant knew his footing. He was trespassing on regulations; he was well aware of that, but between him and any citizen he was the better armed just now.

“I don’t know why I should take orders from you,” he said, calmly and firmly; then he added, “Mr. Somers,” with a possible emphasis on the title.

“You are sergeant of the guard. Go to your post, or I will have your belts off in ten minutes.”

“You go slow, or I will have you in

the bottom of the creek in ten seconds," came in anger from the soldier. Then he added again, as thrust, reminder, taunting—all in one—" *Mr. Somers.*"

" *Lieutenant Somers,*" corrected the other, with an undoubted emphasis on the title.

" Lieutenant?" cried the girl, with an inflection of inquiry.

" Lieutenant!" echoed Gore, in deep derision. He did not believe the Secretary of War would ever make that man an officer.

" Yes, lieutenant," said Somers, sharply. " My commission came to-day."

That settled it. He was clearly master here. But Gore was game. He took Terita's hand and led her across the brook on the stepping-stones that long had paved the way from earth to paradise—stones that memory would bind about his neck hereafter, while he struggled in the infinite sea of despair.

But he would have given a sixth year of service in the barracks for just one hour at the hay corral with that subaltern.

“ Good-night, Terita,” he said, as he reached her door. There was no attempt at hushing his voice as became a plebeian on the borders of patrician realms. He lifted his cap with perfect grace, bowed low and went away, proud as a gentleman.

All the officers and their families, sitting the evening out upon their balconies, saw the episode ; but they had not seen that brief passage at arms across the creek. The officer of the day only knew that here was a sergeant of the guard gallanting a girl when he should have been at his post. He put on his hat and called to the retreating figure, while Terita wrung her hands in an agony for Gore, then pressed them in rejoicing for Somers’s good fortune.

The two men met half-way across the parade-ground.

“ What are you doing, sergeant ? ”

"Disobeying orders, I fear, sir," answered the culprit, saluting.

"Go to your post. I shall report you in the morning."

They saluted again and parted. That night Sergeant Gore was Upton personified in his strict adherence to regulations. Next morning he was relieved before guard mount, and the corporal turned over "the fort and all its stores" to the succeeding detail.

"Lieutenant William Somers says you insulted him last night," said the commanding officer, sternly, when he had summoned Gore before him. The non-commissioned man told the whole story just as it was.

"Go back to your quarters, and never let such conduct occur again."

Gore was out of it easier than he had expected. He was not even reduced to the ranks. Surely that grim old colonel saw more than the surface of things.

But Terita? Well, she grew very chilling. Young Lieutenant Somers honored her with a horseback ride down the valley, though his conduct met stern disapproval from the other officers and their wives. It was one thing for Terita to be courted by an enlisted man soon to leave the service; it was quite another for an officer to show her favors—and she a waiting-maid!

Sergeant Gore was not reduced to the ranks, but he might have been for all he cared. He was hopelessly smitten by that little girl. He could not wake his pride and dismiss all thought of her. He grew less tidy, and his springing gait became a painful drag. He did his duty in a slipshod way, and only roused to interest when the squad-rooms were agog with speculation as to where "Lieutenant Billy" would be assigned for service. He only listened to their chatter when the men recounted some new freak of that late-fledged lieutenant. His arrogance,

his tyranny, his petty spite, won him a place of singular dislike. Gore hoped, yet dreaded, that the time would come when he could wreak his anger on that upstart. He did much violence to his blood and training as he pictured some possible collision. He thought of Achilles, who was bereft by a baser, not a better, soldier—and smiled at the stupendous vanity pent in the simile.

A month went by. The new lieutenant had an open field for Terita, so far as rivals went, but he still found rough sailing in the social waters. At last, in self-defence, he announced his intention to marry the girl as soon as he was assigned to duty, and said, in a burst of heroics, that he would be proud to take her with him as his wife wherever he might go. And from that time his wooing was frowned on less hardly than before.

But that assignment to duty! It troubled him far more than anyone else.

Until it came that Spanish damsel held him at a most tantalizing arm's length. It was very provoking. He prayed for the Presidio, near San Francisco ; he dreaded Fort Yuma or St. Francis.

Sergeant Gore lay half-asleep on a bench in front of the quarters, and gazed at that point of rocks across the parade-ground. The October wind lifted his blond hair and blew it about, shaming him for neglecting the barber. It occurred to him that the mail-coach was due to-day, and he was not so tidy as he should be when his letter came. He glanced down at his uniform, at his dusty boots ; he passed his palm across a very stubble-field of cheek. He waked to the consciousness that all this was unmanly, not to say unsoldier-like, no matter what the provocation, and he drew himself together with a quick resolve to be more worthy of that distant home where he was waited with such patient love.

As he set his face toward the rather humble house of tonsure some quality in the rising wind attracted him. An arrow of cold, like an icy needle, shot its warning through the warmer air. In the northwest, hovering on the ragged peaks of Shasta, were banks of leaden clouds, while just overhead, with lowering pressure, swept the fleecy vanguard of the storm.

"Blizzard to-night," said Gore, sententiously, to the barber; and then, in a tone more life-like than they had known in weeks, he added: "One shave, one haircut, one waxed mustache," and clambered in the chair.

When he left the place an hour later he was the Gore of other days. Not a fleck of dust stained the dark blue of his garments; not a touch of soil dimmed the lustre of his shoes, while buttons, linen, sunny locks and all, marked the model soldier.

Just before him a little heap of leaves and grasses woke in confusion and scampered up the spiral staircase of the wind. Over in the great corral swine were borrowing trouble with loud, incisive cries, and carrying wisps of hay into the lee of heavy walls. The army of clouds that stood on Shasta when he passed before had advanced a score of miles, and gusts of cold, like scouts, were trying the passages of cañon and hill. Light flakes of snow shot by, fell in a group on the porch at the quarters, and whirled in a waltz to the sharp whistling of the storm.

“Put on your overcoats,” said the sergeant of the guard to the relief. Inside the squad-room some men were kindling a fire. Gore watched them through the window, then walked briskly to and fro the length of the building. He was erect, clear-brained, deep-breathing, exultant. His vigor was wakened by the tonic of frost.

Snow drifted in long, loose ridges across the parade-ground, as the sundown roll was called. At tattoo the blast had grown so bitter that the men stood close in the shelter of the buildings, as in midwinter; while the officer of the day, in top-boots and field-cloak, was buried to the knees in the gathering drifts. Taps, the final bugle-call of the day, was drowned in the louder trumpeting of the hurricane.

Gore thought of his horse, and stole from the barracks to make sure of the animal's comfort. The storm was raging. Winds, like moistened lashes, whipped his face. He bent his head and ran, stumbling over unfamiliar things, tripping, recovering, and chafing his freezing wrists. Surely he had gone far enough. He was bewildered. He turned his back and tried to find the outlines of the buildings or the hills. Vision could not pierce beyond that mad, tempestuous whirl of sleety snow.

He was lost!

But under the chilling paralysis of that moment, when life and death contended with just lengthened lances, the heart of the man rose with a throb of defiance. He would not be frozen. Where was the corral? the quarters? where was he? One moment of confusion meant a panic and the end. One moment of calmness might save him. He shouted aloud, but the vicious demon of the storm snatched the message and shattered it—scattered it to all the winds at once. He knew it could not be heard ten yards away. But he called again, and just as calmly. Somewhere in that hurrying blast was surely a breeze that would carry the cry to willing ears. He tried again.

Then, behind him just a little way, rose an answer. He turned and called quickly. Quicker still came a response. But this new voice was one of beseeching. It was a plea for help. Gore struggled to-

ward it, guided by its rising, waking, hopeful repetition. He stumbled blindly against a fence—and knew his bearings in an instant.

There to his right, buried in the drift, battling feebly to escape, crouched "Lieutenant Billy."

Gore gazed on him in silence just one moment; but in that little lapse of time his bosom was a battle-field of tempests as fierce as that without. How easy to end it all just here! No need to touch him; no need to speak. No one on earth would ever know he stood above those epaulets and took receipt in full for slavery.

Just one moment, and then a breath from that good home in far-off Philadelphia flashed past the leagues that lay between, and stirred his heart to manhood.

"Hello there, Lieutenant!" he shouted, grasping a numbed arm with one hand, while with the other he held to the fence as to a life-line that could bear them

both to safety. "Hello, there! Get up! You're freezing."

The bewildered man rose stiffly, grasping wildly for support. He could not walk; he could not stand. He fell full length and helpless in the snow.

Gore stooped and wrapped his strong arms about the prostrate body; he raised it to his shoulder and then crowded along against the fence till it led him to the quarters.

A month of fairest weather followed, and not a vestige of the storm-wrought ruin could be seen in the valley. Sergeant Gore was discipline again. He didn't care about Terita, and he was quits with Somers. His arms shone resplendent, his uniform was a model of beauty, his conduct was all that a soldier could desire. He declined with dignity the lieutenant's invitation to come to the officers' quarters and be thanked.

"Tell him," he said to the orderly, "that I saved him just as I would a steer or a pony. I don't care a copper whether he gets well or not."

This was far from true; but the brute in man is sometimes so strong that it demands concessions, and they must be made. He could not forget, and it was still more impossible to forgive.

He was strolling past the esplanade one day, upright, defiant. The mail had just brought him a letter from home. It raised him visibly above all things in Bidwell. It warmed and comforted—it satisfied him.

Teritá leaned from the colonel's balcony and accosted him.

"So glad to see you," she said. "I have wanted to talk with you. Let us walk on the grass beyond the creek to-night."

"What will Somers say?"

How perverse he was. But even as he watched for the effect of his thrust, his heart leaped wildly. Oh, those little

hands, that gladsome face, those ripe, red lips!

“Why,” with a laugh, “what do I care?”

Plainly the new commission had lost its charms.

“I’ll come,” said Gore, not quite so heartily as he once had done, but with a vein of independence that was worth much to him.

That night they crossed the creek, treading those blessed stepping-stones, and walked in the moonlight again. The evenings were chilling now, and Terita wore a true Castilian mantilla. They talked of everything—but one. She sang the old songs, she laughed and flattered him; she won him utterly, and then she said:

“You were so good to save ‘Lieutenant Billy.’ Poor fellow, he is so grateful to you.”

Gore sniffed his contempt.

“He has been assigned to duty at—I can’t remember.”

"The Presidio?" with fear and trembling.

"No—oh, my, no. At Fort Buford, in Northern Dakota. His orders came to-day."

Talk of anything now. She has spread her net, has secured her prize; here she transfixed him. When he left her that night Sergeant Gore trod on zephyrs. He was too happy to lie in bed even after taps, and stole away beyond the boiling springs to walk alone and fashion castles in the air—castles that in these later days he has peopled with the fairies of love requited, the genii of manhood's strength and woman's blessing.

And Terita? Why, time has given stature, rarest comeliness, and unswerving truth to her. She is prouder of her home, her handsome husband, and her pretty children, than ever was the wife of a grandee in Spain.

THE TALE OF A GOBLIN
HORSE

BY CHARLES C. NOTT





HORSES are like babies—chiefly interesting to their owners. Occasionally they emerge from the enclosure of home life, and become interesting to other people. One in a million may find his way into print, but most rare are the horses whose *characters* are worthy of record. The one of which I write comes a step nearer to

humanity in this, that a shadow of mystery falls upon his life and end.*

He belonged to the Fremont Hussars ; but how he came into the regiment no man could tell. It was in September, 1861, and the regiment, not yet equipped, was in camp near St. Louis. Newly built sheds for horses and newly pitched tents for men lay in parallel lines, and around the encampment ran the high fence of the "Abbey Race Track." In this, the

* The story here printed is not fiction, although, as the reader will perceive, it is as improbable a story of a horse as was ever written. All of the facts actually occurred ; the most improbable event in the narrative was duly substantiated by legal evidence at the time, and this evidence has been submitted to the editor. The author is one of the seniors of our Federal judges ; the commanding officer of the regiment first referred to was Colonel George E. Waring, the well-known sanitary engineer ; and another witness of the incidents narrated was Colonel James F. Dwight, recently one of the assignees in bankruptcy and a well-known member of the New York bar.

first flush of war, recruits poured in, a daily stream; and another stream, the troopers' horses, came flowing from the Government corrals. These two streams, however, did not flow in evenly together; sometimes the men were in excess, sometimes the horses. But whenever there was a surplus of the latter, although the mass would remain the same, there would be a strange disintegration of the particles. Sixty horses the officer in charge would leave under guard at nightfall, and sixty horses would be found under guard at daybreak; yet how changed! So many sick! so many lame! such a noticeable decrease in size and spirit! For the Fremont Hussars consisted largely of German veterans who knew a thing or two of soldiering and horses, and who held that the best of troopers would be useless to the cause of freedom unless he were well mounted. Wherefore, as the "reserve mounts" grew nightly

worse, the six mounted companies appeared daily better. Such fine horses they rode; all so healthy and sound. "Why are our horses so goot? Why, because we take so goot care of tem." One could not help liking these kind-hearted Dutchmen.

But when the seventh company came to be mounted out of the "reserve mounts," then there was awful swearing to be heard in the land—storms of harsh consonants—cataracts of Dutch oaths. And then the men already mounted, like disinterested patriots seeking to throw oil on the troubled waters, would address the to-be-mounted in calm and soothing words which pointed toward future arrivals of horses for future recruits, and intimated that at such fortunate epochs it could be made "all richt." Whereupon, the exasperated, with glances thrown toward the distant Government corral, and an ominous Germanic jerk of the head ex-

pressive of much inward resolve, would say to all concerned, "Never mindt, never mindt."

In this state of equine affairs a newly mustered captain of the regiment awaiting the arrival of his own private horses, and needing a temporary mount, looked despondingly through the reserve, and found no horse which it would become "an officer and gentleman" to ride. As he stood negotiating the purchase of a cheap animal from a brother officer, a sergeant came up, and said that there was a well-appearing horse in the ninth shed, a horse that no one seemed to own. The party walked around to the shed, and at one end of it, with three or four of the rejected "rats" of the regiment, found a large chestnut sorrel, in appearance much above the average of troopers' horses. How so good-looking an animal came to be standing there, instead of in some of the six companies'

stables, was the first question. The sergeant had observed him there for three days past or more ; one man believed he had been rejected by a Prussian veteran as too rough a trotter ; another that he had thrown his rider ; but no one really knew anything about him. The inspecting officers of the regiment chanced to be lounging near, and they averred that they had never inspected the horse. But he bore the regimental brand and stood in the regimental stables.

As the party approached the horse the captain was struck with his breadth of forehead and dark, sinister eye. The sergeant also noticed the latter, for he immediately said, " That's a wicked eye he has." The horse quickly turned his head toward the sergeant and looked at him steadily with a mild, contemplative expression ; the remainder of the party said they saw nothing wicked about him. As they waited for a saddle to be brought

the horse yawned, stretching his deep mouth wide, and disclosing a tongue that had been half cut off, *i.e.*, about midway in the tongue were the remains of a deep gash which had nearly severed it in two, and now left the lower half of a peninsula connected only by a narrow isthmus with the main continent.

The saddle came and an Austrian officer mounted. He was a noble of the "blue blood," on leave of absence, and a captain of the Hussars. He rode with the stiff, straight leg of a Continental cavalry officer, erect and commanding above the saddle; awkward and unbecoming below—an unyielding seat, exacting and wearisome to man and beast. But, like all of the Prussian and Austrian officers, he understood his business thoroughly, and when a trooper could not manage his horse on drill, it was his way to order the man to dismount and ride the refractory animal for him. Un-

der his easy hand the horse he was now trying appeared much better than when in the stable, moving off in a free, bold trot, with head and ears erect, like those hunters which English painters love to sketch trotting to the "meet," the red coat bending forward and rising in the stirrups with every stride. His trot was, indeed, a trifle too high and rough for a McClellan saddle and a "hard-riding" seat; but nothing to reject a good horse for; and there was a superior gallop with long and steady stride, and hoof-beats falling regular as clock-work. There was no shying, starting, or stumbling; he was neither restive nor lazy; he moved quietly and freely; he was just the horse that an officer would choose for the daily drill; and the only objection that appeared was that he was not an easy horse "to ride hard."

"To ride hard" doubtless means, to many an American, to ride furiously. In

fact, it is the distinguishing term between the rising and falling, easy seat of the English gentleman, and the fixed, immovable seat of the English officer. When the Duke of Wellington was asked: "How long is a man fit to be a general?" he answered: "As long as he is able to see to everything himself and ride hard." In this topsy-turvy world of ours there is a wonderful compliance of things to their conditions. All men have "builded better than they knew," if they have but built at all. It may be laid down as a general law of transportation, that whenever good carriage-ways are built the horseman dismounts. He mounts again for parade or pleasure, for exercise or excitement; but his transportation business he evermore will do on wheels. The English are an exception to the rule. They travel in the saddle, they ride to market, to Parliament, to their counting-houses, to their hunting

meets. They ride twenty miles to lunch, and twenty back to dinner; and they ride upon hard highways and smooth macadam roads. Generations of experience have taught them that the steady trot and shifting seat are the movements of the united horse and man, which yield to both, upon solid stone roads, the largest amount of ease with the least degree of strain. The trooper with his sabre, and the cow-boy with his lasso, cannot surrender the free activity of body and arm. They must always be in the saddle. In the deep prairie grass the trotter loses his feet; so the cow-boy rides upon an easy lope. The trooper must ride at all gaits, and hence he must always "ride hard."

The Austrian dismounted and spoke well of the horse. So did the small crowd of horse-critics, officers and men, that gathered round him. For your horse is a leveller in society; and in the stable

gentlemen and jockey grow familiar, without contempt, in a common enthusiasm ; and in the cavalry camp officers and men mingle around the leveller, whose best judge, for the time, is the best man—the authority of highest rank. So this horse, which had been dozing for days amid six hundred sharp-eyed horsemen—each in want of a better horse than he had—seemed suddenly to awake and arouse the interest of all who saw him.

The horse had not been bitted ; he was not “bridle-wise,” and he knew but one meaning in his rider’s spur. And there was no time to train him, for the “Department of the West” was a bee-hive then, without drones. The untaught officers from civil life’s quiet ignorance had not time to train themselves. There was drilling of men, inspecting of horses, beseeching ordnance officers for arms, imploring quarter-masters for clothing. Matchless was the zeal and the industry

that reigned in every camp during "Fre-mont's hundred days." Yet in the turmoil of the time this horse seemed to learn by looking on, and, at the end of a week, to know everything. The slightest touch of the rein upon his neck, the mere motion of the rider's hand, the gentlest pressure of the leg, would wheel him without the use of bit or bridle. So imperceptible were the means employed, that some who watched him thought that he understood the commands, and made his "right-wheel" or "left turn" at the mere word.

It was observed that this horse seemed to delight in drilling—in drilling, not being drilled. It was as the captain's horse, out of the ranks and viewing the unhappy condition of his kind, that he was happy. For, as the "coach" of a boat's crew is properly on the outside of the boat, so the instructor of cavalry is always on the outside of his squad. He moves but little,

and the men in their evolutions revolve around him. Occasionally he changes his position, but then halts to command, and explain, and criticise. When the captain thus halted, and the reins were dropped, and the new horses in the ranks were crowding, and kicking, and fretting, and sweating, then would this one's sinister eye glow with Satanic joy. When the squadron passed before him on the gallop, and dull horses were being pricked up by spurs, and fiery colts wrenched back by curbs, then would he stand placid as the Indian summer sky, and plant his fore-feet well in front and stretch his legs, and body, and long neck, and deep jaws, with such exquisite enjoyment as the sight of misery might give the animal with the cloven hoof and tail, from the stable below. If it were regimental drill, and he was denied the sweets of contemplation, then would he take his place in front of the line or beside the column, and move

with the regularity of a machine, indifferent to the existence of all other horses. He never became excited; he never showed the ineradicable desire of his kind to race; he led down deep descents with no increase of speed, and up sharp acclivities without "losing distance;" he did not swerve a hair's-breadth for a huge heap of broken stones, but mounted and traversed it at his measured trot. Yet when the hours of drill were over, and sounding bugles, and shouting drill-officers, and charging squadrons were gone, and the prairie was deserted and still, and any other horse would look toward the stable and seek to follow his mates, then a wild excitement would sometimes fall upon this one, and he would rear, and plunge, and kick, and gallop around and around like an escaping colt.

The horse was not long in acquiring a name. At first he was known as "The Drill Sergeant," but there was soon a

new development of character in which, as has been the case with many notable characters, he succeeded in making a name for himself. The afternoon drill was over, the October sun was sinking through the golden haze, and the captain, with his friend D., was sauntering from the drill-ground to their quarters. It chanced that they came upon a young officer trying to force his newly bought horse up to some bloody hides that hung upon a fence beside the road. They volunteered a precept or two as they passed; but precepts are mere blank cartridges, worth nothing without the projectile of example. The young officer understood the fact, if not the philosophy, and he intimated a wish that the "Drill Sergeant" might be ridden up to the fence, and he and his colt be shown, not told, how to do it. D. had dismounted then and sent his horse to the stable, but he applauded the lieutenant's sentiment, and said that it

was perfectly fair; nothing, he thought, could be more reasonable, and he really hoped it would not be passed by unnoticed. The captain touched the "Drill Sergeant's" neck slightly with the rein, who with veteran-like gravity turned and advanced toward the fence. The captain was sitting loungingly in the saddle, with an air of easy listlessness, one foot playing with the stirrup, the reins hanging loose upon the pommel. He was thinking that the "Drill Sergeant" would march on until his breast touched the fence, and he was intending to say that if young officers would train their colts first, and acquire a moral control over them, they might ride them up to bloody hides also. He was indeed just turning in his saddle to give utterance to the precept, when there was a bolt which seemed to him a small earthquake—a bolt rearward, roundward, upward, downward, and he found himself some thirty feet distant, and the "Drill

Sergeant " standing placidly again in the middle of the road. The rider was not unhorsed, as he confessed he deserved to have been. Without knowing how, he had kept himself on the " Drill Sergeant's " back, who was now, as has been said, standing placidly in the road. The young officer promptly seized his opportunity and said, sarcastically, that he had expected to be shown how to do it—he added seriously that the captain had better not try it again, for that horse was a wicked one, and the " rock road," with its loose, broken stone, a bad place for a fall. D. blandly interposed, and thought differently. He thought the captain *had* better try it again—when surprised, he had not been thrown, and now that he was on his guard there could be no danger. D. added that there was nothing more delightful than to witness a contest between the intelligence of man and the power of a brute. It did him good, he said. Be-

sides, we cavalry officers should not mind a fall ; we must get used to them.

The captain righted himself in the saddle and gathered up the reins. He had been preaching that with horses things should be done slowly and persistently : but as mutiny in officers is worse than mutiny in privates, even so, bolting by a trained and sedate horse is worse than bolting by an impulsive colt, and must be dealt with summarily. The captain turned the " Drill Sergeant " again toward the fence ; again he advanced freely, and again, before the rider could find time or excuse for driving the spurs into him, there was the same rearward, roundward bolt, and they were standing in the middle of the road. D. applauded highly, and said that, if desired, he would " certify on honor " that no horse ever did turn around so quickly in this world. He added that he honestly thought that the captain had better try it again ; it was so very entertaining.

The captain and the horse, externally, were calm ; but their two wills had crossed. As the horse turned for the third time toward the fence, a philosopher looking on would have asked whether in that brute body there was not some predeterminate resolve ; whether the mouth with the bit in it was not more tightly shut, and the mane-covered forehead was not contracted and knit ; whether the angry light that began to break from the eyes was not radiant from some angry soul within. But here the cunning of the human intellect appeared and took its part in the game—that cunning which, when applied to the movements of contending armies, we call strategy—that covert ally which the brute did not possess. As the horse moved forward to the fence, but ere the bolting point was reached, the rider's spurs came biting fiercely upon his flanks, driving him forward, and the reins held him face to face with the spectre on the fence whither

he would not go. Then the horse became a fury, and his dark, sinister eyes turned bloody red. The rider's knees gripped the saddle more closely, and his arms grew stronger to bend the strong neck of the animal and to rein around his defiant head; but as the fight grew hot his cunning ally fled the field and the contest became more equal—strategy no longer took a part in the struggle; it was skill and strength against strength and skill—the sharp sting of the spurs, the iron hoofs beating on rocks and stones—each creature intuitively knowing and resisting every act of the other, neither of them gaining or losing an inch—the one no nearer his goal, the other unable to fling off his warring burden.

But it was a battle without result; the bugle sounded the "retreat;" the king of the tournament dropped his warder; the heralds proclaimed a truce. D. said it was delightful, charming, but that we

must go to the roll-call and get ready for dinner, and have it out in the morning.

That evening, at the mess dinner-table, the battle was discussed. D. was glowing in his description and declared that the "Drill Sergeant" should be named "Tarquinius Superbus." The majority thought differently and named him "Animus Furiosus," and after that they called him "Animus" for short.

The following morning promised to be fateful, but the battle was not renewed. It is the unexpected that happens in war. On the one hand, the hides were gone; on the other, Animus walked serenely up to the fence, rested his neck upon it, looked blandly over with ears inquiringly erect, and eyes, for the moment, as innocent as a dove's.

Innocent he continued to appear, obliging, sensible, and grave, but in his heart of hearts was brewing a storm of resentment and revenge. A week or two passed

in peace, and then came a day whereon the company to which Animus belonged was to be mustered into the service of the United States. Animus led the column to the mustering officer's official abode, he (and the mustering officer) alone unruffled, unexcited. His rider proud and exultant whenever he glanced back at the ninety splendid young fellows who rode behind. A splendid company it was, splendidly mounted, and as the tramping hoofs resounded through the streets of St. Louis, the two sets of hearts beat faster, and troopers and steeds seemed equally elate. There is an earthly satisfaction in the human beast that none but the trooper knows ; when the cavalry cap works itself jauntily over, inclining toward the right ear with a saucy pitch forward toward the right eye, requiring the head to be held a little back, and the chin to be drawn a little in, and the chest to be thrown a little out ; when the clattering

scabbard, the jingling spurs, the champed bit, unite forces with the prancing, sympathetic vanity of the horse; when the eyes that won't stay "front," "right" and "left" up at second-story windows, not in rude civilian stares, but in gay, half-audacious, half-deferential glances! Oh, reader, when you see the troopers in Washington swaggering about the Army headquarters, envy them, for you know not (unless you have been a trooper) "how good" that swagger makes them feel.

Through the streets of St. Louis, Animus led, profoundly indifferent to the citizens around him; coolly disdainful of the ninety fretting, fuming steeds behind. The "fours" formed platoons, and the platoons wheeled into line, with a precision that must have made the calloused mustering officer think himself back at West Point. And then there came two girls, pretty and young, with smiling,

sympathetic loyal faces, in whom the trooper's saucy airs took the form of pretty timidity; and they stopped and hesitated, and almost came forward, and partly turned back, and seemed to say that their important business did really require them to go immediately straight onward down the street, but that they positively could never dare to pass so near to so many men and such terrible horses; and then the captain of the company—as became the captain of such a company—sought to move himself a trifle farther from the sidewalk and throw a chivalrous yard or two of safety to the timorous damsels; and then Animus flared up.

He had a crooked Roman nose, had Animus, and a forehead that receded and rounded toward the ears; he was good-looking in a horseman's, and not in a lady's, sense of the term; and when his eyes turned red and his lips opened and showed white frothy teeth, I have no doubt but

that this head of his looked much like a wild eagle's head on a horse's body. The two girls screamed and beat a retreat without any more pretty hesitation, and the rider's blood boiled up at the excuseless conduct, and he rowelled the horse with his burnished spurs and beat him with the flat of his polished sabre;

The horse seemed frantic; he dashed against the brick walls of the houses; he knocked the alignment of the company to pieces in a trice; he banged against front-steps and lamp-posts, and sent an aged cobbler fleeing through the back door of his poor, little shop; and he plunged and beat his hoofs upon the cellar-door as if he meant immediately to go by that route to the place below. Then he stopped—suddenly—instantaneously—not quenched or quailing, but as if the fight then and there were but ammunition wasted, and he had better save the captain for a better opportunity. And after

the affair was over, there came a strong conviction in the rider's mind that the horse might have done more, but would not; and friends began to advise that he should not keep that beast for service; for, they said, if one of his wild moods should come in action, it would be certain death to the man who rode him.

Again Animus lapsed into quiet working ways, biding his time to throw contempt at men and things. An opportunity came one fine Sunday, when there was a grand review at Benton Barracks. It was the first time the young soldiers had seen a field of thousands, and to them the pageant seemed magnificent. If now, when artillery was thundering, and infantry presenting arms, and a dozen regimental bands were playing their loudest, this horse should rear and pitch as half the horses in the line were doing, it would not be unreasonable, and indeed would be attributed to commendable high spirit.

The captain was thinking more of his company than of his horse, and indeed gave him no thought, till the general and his staff came down the line. Then, as the important moment approached when each individual volunteer knew that he must look his best, and all eyes were "to the front," and every man sitting erect, then he glanced down to see how Animus would take it, and in his astonishment whispered to D. (who was next on the officers' line), and nodded at the horse. D. looked out of the corners of his eyes (his nose being straight to the front, his head erect, and his sabre at a carry), and then he turned red as though he were choking, and shook with laughter as if he might fall off his horse; for then, as the gorgeous staff swept by, and the regimental bands blew their loudest blasts, and everybody was all excitement and other horses were well-nigh crazed—then Animus had composedly crossed his fore-legs

like unto the legs of a saw-buck, and had dropped his ears back upon his neck like the ears of a rabbit, and had calmly shut his eyes and serenely sunk into counterfeit slumber.

But malice still reigned in the heart of Animus, and while he did his work with a gravity above horses, he never let slip an opportunity to do damage. One gloomy morning after the company had been moved from the Abbey Track into Benton Barracks, when rain had been falling and freezing all night, and none but a sharpshod horse could keep his feet, Animus was brought up to the quarters. The orderly had not dared to bring both horses together over the slippery ground, and when he went back he hitched Animus to a post of the piazza. Animus did not mind being hitched; he had been hitched to that post a hundred times, where he would shut his eyes and doze by the hour. Around the corner of another

range of barracks stood an infantry regiment in line, and the sergeants could be heard calling their rolls. Nothing disturbed the horse, for nobody was stirring that morning, but the instant the orderly was out of sight he began to pull violently at the halter. The red eyes were upon him, and the piazza post to which he was hitched was a contending foe. It gave way at the roof and broke off at the floor. It was a stout 4 by 5 inch joist, twelve feet long, and as an anchor it would have brought an ordinary horse round "head to the wind;" and an ordinary horse breaking loose on a cold rainy day, if he had made off with it in tow, would have headed for his stable. Animus turned in the opposite direction, and, holding his head on one side and his nose near to the ground, scoured off as fast as he could go, the joist skimming like a sled over the icy glare. He headed for the barracks, behind which was the infantry regiment, and

all who saw him: prayed devoutly that when he should turn the corner he would lose his footing, and fall and break his infernal neck. He did not, and as the heavy joist swung from centrifugal force almost up to an alignment with the horse, everyone thought that the infernal machine, like a Roman chariot with scythes on the axles, must mow down at least twenty men. But the infantry, when the tornado of horse and timber came rushing around the corner, broke ranks faster than the "double quick," and the joist merely grazed a number of heroic shins. Then Animus, seeing that he had failed in his diabolical, or rebel* design, halted, was caught and brought back, looking both innocent and unconcerned.

But we must omit some of the incidents of his life and pass to his mysterious taking off. In the dreariness of winter and of barrack-life among strangers and sick and home-sick men, the greatest of bless-

ings was a day's escape from the camp. It came occasionally in the guise of some duty to be done in the city, and one lucky morning, a coveted "pass" reached the captain's quarters. The orderly brought up the horses, and his own happening to be lame, he rode Animus. A merry, active, light-hearted German boy was the orderly; familiar, yet never presumptuous; scrupulous and rigid in the punctilious respect he always paid to his captain. None but a German could unite so much familiar ease with so much ceremonious deference. Unbidden, he held bit and stirrup as the officer mounted; untaught, he "took distance" behind him and never varied from his respectful place. If the captain's horse trotted, his trotted; if the captain's galloped, his galloped; and never had the captain given the orderly command or hint. He had been quick to find out from old Prussian soldiers the respect which he should ceremoniously

pay his officer, and was proud to pay it. But suddenly there came from the orderly a blast of Dutch execration ; he was almost out of the saddle, and Animus about to finish the job. The captain sung out sharply to the horse, who stopped instantly, and the orderly climbed back and recovered his seat. For more than three months had the orderly taken care of Animus, and more than three hundred times had he ridden him bare-back to water. He could not account for this freak now. " Tee horse go quiet—I no do anything, and then he throw me off most ;" and there came mingling terms of indignation and reproach addressed privately to Animus in smothered German.

The city, after the camp, seemed civilization, cleanliness, decency, comfort ; a warm bath and an arm-chair luxuries too great for times of war. The captain entered Barnum's Hotel with such a loving feeling as no hotel can kindle again.

And the cheery proprietors, Messrs. Barnum & Fogg—many a wounded and home-sick officer's blessing rests upon them—they seemed angels in disguise, with the difference that, instead of seeking entertainment, they entertained.

The captain found a friend at the hotel and they dined together in the ladies' ordinary; and the ladies appeared divinely graceful after one had seen, for weeks, nothing but men in stiff Quaker coats, dyed blue, with a row of brass buttons down the front. And after dinner the two friends smoked and talked, and felt so at ease, by their two selves, with no dense throng around them; but part they must, for the lieutenant had been ill—lucky dog—and had a week's leave, and was not to go back to the barracks that night.

When eight o'clock came the captain pulled on his overcoat, bade good-night, and with slow, reluctant steps, went down into the street. The orderly, true to a

minute, was coming with the horses, riding the captain's mare, to keep the saddle dry ; for the weather had changed and the cold north wind was blowing a gale and snow beating fiercely down. The captain pulled up his coat-collar and mounted ; the orderly swung himself into his own saddle, and off they went through deserted streets, and dark, bleak suburbs.

But as they passed from the lights of the town into the gloom beyond, Animus again made one of his savage bolts, and again the orderly was half out of the saddle and clinging by the mane. The captain sung out to the horse as before, and the horse, as before, obeyed and stopped. They rode fast, they rode slowly, but again and again and again this performance was repeated ; the orderly never quite unhorsed, the horse always stopping the instant he was commanded.

At length they reached the camp. As the captain dismounted at his quarters,

he gave a reluctant, a delicate intimation to the orderly that it would be wise to dismount and lead the horses to the stable. The orderly, who was well-nigh in tears at Animus's ungrateful conduct, regarded the proposition as extraordinary, which it was ; and he pleaded, with German vehemence, that the whole company would laugh at him and " the boys " would shout whenever they saw him : " Where's the man who couldn't ride his own horse to the barn ? " which they would. He also urged that he could ride any horse in the world, and that no horse in the world would " cut up " at the end of a day's work, when his accustomed groom was taking him to his accustomed stable. The last argument seemed reasonable, and indeed the original suggestion began to appear absurd. The captain, in unspoken words, yielded the point ; the orderly wheeled the horses and moved off, riding the one and leading the other. A shadowy

sense of coming catastrophe kept the captain at his door, watching them until he saw horses and horseman turn the corner of the barracks and disappear. Then he unpadlocked the door and lighted his candle. A small room roughly boarded off from the men's quarters, an army cot covered with a couple of rough army blankets, a "mess-chest table," a camp chair, a spare saddle, and horse-trappings, a fireless stove, an atmosphere laden with the dust and noise and stale tobacco-smoke of the men's quarters. The captain and his company were then the victims of a combination between unscrupulous political selfishness, on the one side, and arbitrary military power, on the other—a doubly dangerous union; for military power is bad enough alone, and needs to be restrained and guided by honor and impartiality. The company had been stolen from the regiment in which all had enlisted, and been taken to help make up

a new command for somebody's son-in-law. Hence, at this time, the captain was friendless and alone.

He did not unbutton his overcoat nor kindle his fire, but paced up and down the narrow room, thinking at first of the horse, and then of Barnum's, and then of home. He thought and walked, and walked and thought until, unexpectedly, the door opened and the orderly appeared. Pain and mortification and truthful resolve struggled in the lines of his face. "Cap-e-tan, the horse trow me; he run away in the Fair Grounds, he jump over a pile of wood. I hav look-ed, and look-ed, and can no find him."

What infernal imp had possessed this strange animal? The orderly was a good rider, a good groom, possessed of great power over horses. Others would follow him without bridles, like dogs. Why had this brute flung him off on the instant that he turned toward his own stable, and then

galloped off into the darkness and the storm? When the orderly shot out of the saddle, the captain's mare had gone straight to her own stall in the stable.

The orderly got a lantern and led the way to the place where he was unhorsed, at the end of the barracks—thence and across the wide expanse of the parade, and into the Fair Grounds and to a pile of corded wood, five feet at least in height and four in thickness. What horse would choose to rush at such a leap on a dark night and with slippery, snowy footing—at such a needless leap? But by the light of the lantern could be seen a horse's trail which led up to the wood-pile, broke off, and reappeared on the other side. They resumed the search. The trail led through the grove of the Fair Grounds, and at last was lost in the deepening snow. As the searchers stopped, the storm roared through the swaying branches above them as if the powers of the air

were on the blast, and the horse had gone to meet them. The captain and the orderly came hack into the encampment, where a soldier, plodding through the snow, told them that he had just seen a horse near by. They resumed their quest, and soon found Animus standing within the shelter of an empty tent. But on the snowy floor beneath him was a small red pool, and on his right flank, between the body and the leg, was a frightful gash—the gash you cut in carving the leg of a fowl—a “clean cut,” and large enough for one to lay in it his hand, wide-spread. Animus looked morose and stern—not sad or repentant.

He was led to his stable and the regimental farrier came, who brought other regimental farriers in consultation, just as humanity's farriers come and consult over human victims. “Extraordinary,” they all pronounced the wound, and without a precedent ; and they all vouchsafed

theories, but agreed on none ; and finally they all concluded that nothing could be done—the patient must be abandoned to nature and cooling washes, and his " chances."

A fortnight later, when the wound was at its worst, and the horse was standing, day and night, upon three legs, great news came roaring, and yelling, and hurrahing through Camp Benton—news of victory—of the first decisive victory of the war ; that Foote had taken Fort Henry with his " Tin-Clads," that the river was open, and the Stars and Stripes flying in Tennessee. An hour later came more significant news for some—" The Fifth Iowa Cavalry will march instantly."

It takes a new regiment in barracks at least twelve hours to " march instantly." Rations to be cooked, tents to be overhauled (the guys gnawed by suspected mice, the pegs burnt by unsuspected criminals), men swearing that their horses

must be shod, blacksmiths swearing that their forges must be packed, mules seditiously kicking the harness to pieces the moment they hear that they are to be put to some practical purpose ; every man suddenly discovering that somebody has jayhawked his boots or his blanket ; and the quarter-sergeant discovering that the boots are packed and loaded, and the blankets too few to go round ; lieutenants and sergeants, corporals and men excitedly rushing to their captain in their individual perplexity ; the captain for a time the unhappy mother of a distracted family, that wants everything and doesn't know what it doesn't want ; finally, the sergeant-major of the regiment, coming round every hour to say to every company that every other company in the regiment is ready and waiting for this one, and that the colonel wants to know how much longer they must wait, etc., etc.

The turmoil lasted during the night, but as the sun came up o'er the smoky city the column moved; and the hoof-beats on the frozen ground and rumbling baggage-wagons rolled out a farewell to Benton Barracks. The captain, then a member of a court-martial sitting at the Barracks, could not march with his men, and had to remain until the formal order should come dissolving the court. With an impatient heart he stood watching the long-drawn column wind around the parade and pass through the gateway of the camp, and saw, last of all, the orderly disappear leading his own blanketed horses. Then he turned and handed a "pass" to his servant, and gave him directions to lead Animus slowly to the "sick stable."

The "company stable" was but a stone's throw distant from where they stood, and only a few minutes had passed since "Boots and Saddles" had sound-

ed and the company horses had been led out, leaving the wounded horse the only tenant of the long shed. Moodily he had continued to gaze at his manger, giving to his departing mates barely a glance, but neither whinny nor regret. The man took the "pass" and went directly to the shed. In the first moment, when all eyes were withdrawn, Animus had disappeared.

"Disappeared but not lost," everyone said; for barracks and stables were enclosed by a wooden wall twelve feet high, and guarded by sentinels, and through the only exit no one could go without a "pass," and the guards at the gate were notified to stop him, thief and all. Moreover, the horse had not set his lame leg to the ground for a fortnight, and it was doubted whether he could hobble on three legs to the sick stable. Besides, who would want a disabled animal, not fit for service now, nor for months to come;

and was not a man leading a desperately lame horse in broad daylight a noticeable object that a thousand men would see and remember? The camp was searched—searched for two days through every stable, tent, and shed that could hold a horse. The case was stated to every cavalry commander, and his word of honor pledged that, if the horse were "hidden away" by any one of "his boys," no matter what their genius for hiding horses away might be, he should nevertheless be found and given up. A reward was offered, and Animus was described by his peculiar regimental brand and tongue and wound; and the advertisement was posted in every quarter-master's office, and corral, and livery-stable. Finally a shrewd, quiet man was set at work as detective; and, six months later, the captain, piqued by all his failures, went back to St. Louis and himself tried to find a clew to the mystery. No clew was found.

Animus had disappeared; that was what was said at first, and all that could be said at last; he had disappeared. Indeed it might be sung of him as of Thomas the Rhymer,

“ And ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.”

At this point, doubtless, there will be expected an explanation such as comes at the end of a novel. But the tale is true. The mysteries of truth are often lacking in the explanations of fiction. The case was laid before D., who had been a United States District Attorney before he became a captain of volunteers, and was versed in the ways of “working up a case” against counterfeiters on land or pirates at sea. He wrote back a letter—a beautiful letter—expressing in charming terms his regret, his very great regret, that so interesting a character as his friend Animus should have withdrawn from the sphere of human observation. But when

he came to the explanation his professional experience and legal acumen were futile; and he had to fall back (evasively) upon the supernatural; Animus was clearly a fiend—an emissary of the Devil or J. Davis (it made very little difference which, he said), who had marked the captain for his peculiar prey. On the day of his wound (which need not be accounted for), fearing that he was to become the orderly's horse and that the captain would thereby escape his toils, he resorted to strategy; and, like all fiends resorting to strategy, overacted his part; whereby vice is defeated and virtue escapes. Finding his schemes subverted and his efforts brought to nought, and disbelieving that he was to be the object of humanitarian care or Christian charity—the latter, moreover, being justly offensive to him—he seized upon the first moment when unseen by mortal or equine eye to vanish in a puff of smoke.

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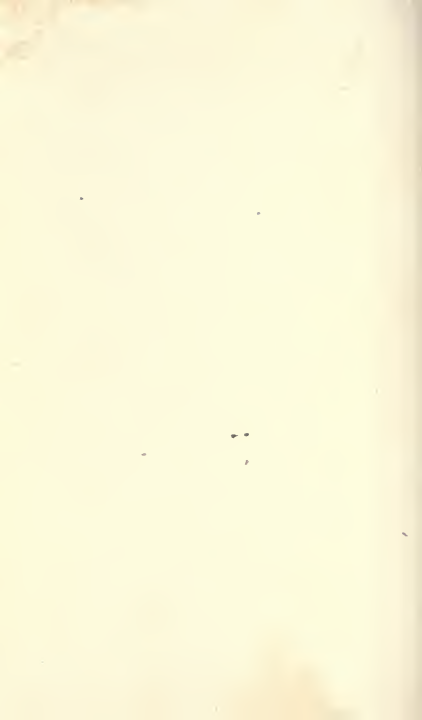
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