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The Canadian Post.

LINDSAY, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1883.

FATED FAIRFAX.

A STORY OF LOVE AND WAR.

Chapter XIV.

MY AFFAIR DOES NOT ANSWER; HIS LIPS...

In spite of hard fare, no better than a trooper's in spite of being all day in the saddle and half the night on the alert, he had never looked better or cheerier. His constitution appeared to be of iron, and he was perfectly indifferent to cold or heat, hunger or fatigue; or if not it was assumed that he was. His spirits and energy were untiring. The discomforts of camp life he treated as an excellent joke, and after dining heartily on ration beef and dry bread, and having kept the company entertained with sallies, stories and toasts he would turn in to his seven foot tent, wrap himself in his military cloak, and with his saddle for a pillow sleep the sleep of the just.

It was determined by the officer in command to start a march on the enemy, and the force was ordered to start at once that night. About one o'clock all the camp was astir. The moon had gone down, but the stars shone brightly and sufficiently brightly to make travelling pleasant, particularly for the cavalry, as the road was cut up by various watercourses and nullahs, in which more than one gallant horseman came to grief, and fished himself out with imprecations loud and deep.

After marching about eight miles the column came to a deep ravine, and a halt was made till three miles further on. As soon as the first streaks of dawn became visible the column was ordered to start, and the movements were so rapid that the cavalry managed to bring them to close quarters. They continued a steady but leisurely retreat until they reached a large walled village about three miles up the valley, encircled in hills and groves of orange trees. From rocks and other objects of vantage a strong fire was opened by the enemy. The Afghan leader is by no means a bad weapon, and cartridges from the Baiter Rifles are not to be despised. Numerous isolated engagements among the rocks around the village were of very good practice, but the main body of the enemy rounded the base of the hill and completely disappeared, as was generally supposed that they had abandoned, but this was soon found to be a mistake. It was merely a feint to draw the British nearer to the village in order that they might have the benefit of an exposure of one kind or another, fired from rocks in the ground. The first time it was fired the properties set off a deafening noise that echoed and re-echoed among the neighboring hills in quite a startling manner. A second time it fired, a second hideous shout then the three columns were at once scattered into play, and it was quickly shut up. At the first two shots from these to the Afghan wholly novel inventions they were too accustomed to noise; the next two sent them flying in all directions. They seemed to melt away like snow before the sun. Suddenly from behind a hill a large body of cavalry appeared, and charged irregularly but at full gallop, very pluckily led by a man on a spotted horse, who cheered them on with loud shouts of "Ghur! Gur!" The column only too delighted to respond to the call, were among them in a twinkling, and the affair was soon cut up into a series of hand-to-hand combats. The Afghan leader was slain, and his death was the signal for the British to charge with the utmost determination and fury. The superior arms and weight of the British were more than they could contend against; they were scattered, put to flight and for a short time hotly pursued. The British had slain many wounded and a number of horses lost or disabled. This was the extent of their casualties. The object of their cavalry completed the rout of the enemy, and the village was properly left behind by its owners in time for each to get at least one of his things to his belt and saddle-bags. The idea of retreat was abandoned. The idea of retreat was abandoned. The idea of retreat was abandoned.

"You are quite welcome to adopt this view of the subject if you like," said the man in number two, very angrily. "To some people their food is their only object of interest."

"Well, well," said the doctor, surveying the two youthful faces before him, and smiling at a loud laugh, "I must not get on my feet for many reasons, chiefly because he understands the art of snubbing bumpkin boys and keeping them in their right places. I am sure it is a mercy that someone can console them, for it is a task that is utterly beyond me," muttered the gallant who had just spoken, and he walked away to his eagerly anticipated breakfast.

There had been a struggle among Sir Reginald's friends for the post of chief nurse; but one man, Mr. C., would not yield the place to any one, and they found their firm belief a mistake. An excellent woman and gentle nurse herself, she would have been a great help to all blundering and ignorant men, but she was so severely wounded that she could not do more than look on and work herself into a fever.

tion, turned and waved his hand most graciously as the great figure passed, but he was a man of stern and determined countenance, and put a fatal termination to him and his evolutions. The infantry spread all over the village and proceeded to fire. Several of the larger buildings were already in a blaze, and many surrounding stacks of corn had been set on fire, and when an incident occurred which nearly cost Sir Reginald his life.

As he was entering down a narrow little dusty lane, he observed two men with pistols standing in evident hesitation before the closed door of a large square house.

Retiring up his horse sharply he asked what they were about. "The partition of the house of the man, saluting him, 'but they say so 'ow the 'ouse is full of Highlanders, all harmed, and we are waiting for a party of the 20th before we venture inside, in case what they say is true.'"

"We will soon see," exclaimed Sir Reginald, jumping off his horse and giving the door a vigorous kick, as old fashion it was and another kick sent it flying open. An ill-directed volley from several pistols greeted the intruder, and five Ghats arm with knives made for the street.

One of the shots had taken effect in Sir Reginald's left arm, and parrying a desperate blow out with his revolver, he closed with his assailant; but a frightful blow from the heavy stock of a native gun, delivered from behind, knocked him down insensible, and a Ghata was about to give him a coup de grace with a long Afghan knife when the sappers and infantry burst in and overpowered the inhabitants, making short work of them with bayonet and revolver.

The struggle in which Sir Reginald had been engaged had not lasted more than half a minute, and when his men came up in a moment of action and found him to all appearance dead they were all grief-stricken. Two wounded Ghatas, who had been granted quarters, relinquished all hopes of life when they saw the many fierce and murderous looks which were at times turned upon them; and when the general, his aide-de-camp and one of the commissaries came galloping up, and they saw their faces and gestures of consternation, they felt the gratifying conviction that at any rate they had killed a Kafir of some importance.

He certainly looked as if he was dead as he lay in the narrow little street with his head resting on the knee of his brother officer. His eyes were closed, over his face the pale death shone already to be creeping. His blue and gold uniform was torn and disfigured with dust and blood, and his left arm hung by his side in such a helpless, unnatural position that it did not seem to be attached to his body. It was badly broken. However, he was not dead, only wounded and insensible. He was carried in a dooly to the permanent camp in two days' march, and the several doctors with the brigade held a consultation on his case, whilst his anxious friends, brother officers and men alike, hung around the tent and waited for the verdict. Great was the relief to hear that, if fever did not supervene, there was nothing serious to be apprehended, but that it would be many a day before Sir Reginald would again lift a sabre.

Still, for some time his state was very precarious, and many were the enquiries that reached the medical officer in charge of the patient. He was a short, round, about elderly man, with beetling brows and a gruff voice, but underneath his rough, rude exterior there lurked a really kind heart.

As he was leaving the hospital one morning he was accosted by one of the "boys" of the Seventeenth, who overwhelmed him with enquiries. "How is Fairfax this morning?" they asked in a breath.

"The doctor rubbed his chin and looked at them reflectively; the two youths were connected in his mind with reminiscences of not an altogether agreeable nature, one of them, who here the obsequious of 'Buttons,' being about the cheekiest and coolest young gentleman he had ever come across, and both displayed an extraordinary aptitude for practical jokes. "He is not going to give you a step this time," replied the doctor, preparing to pass on.

without waiting for a reply of any kind, he turned on his heel and departed. Captain Vaughan and Mr. Harvey declared over and over again that they did not agree with the doctor, but each made a mental reservation to himself. Their patient's recovery was no longer a matter of course, and they placed anxiously toward him, they were more than ever struck by his worn and sunken features, his hurried, labored breathing, and the staring contrast between his dark hair and gleaming white face.

"Well, Sir Reginald's Afghan dog, a great shaggy runner, something like a collie, with a black and white coat and pointed ears, sat on his haunches, with his nose resting on the bed, surveying his master with grave inquiring eyes. To judge from the sorrowful and solemn face he thought as badly of the patient as did his human friends.

The two officers had not forgotten the doctor's intimation of a special search over the desk for keys, desk, letters and addresses. They found a small and most unprepossessing little leather desk, while they turned out and rummaged it, it contained papers and envelopes, some letters and a cheque-book, but not one of the letters was in a lady's hand or bore the slightest resemblance to the handwriting of the doctor's fairfax. After some discussion they agreed to write to the respectable Mark Mayhew, who seemed a frequent correspondent.

As they were turning out the contents of the desk they found a cabinet photograph, a half-length likeness of a slender girl in white dress, with a smile in her eyes, and a fox-glove in her hand. "Hullo!" exclaimed Mr. Harvey, stooping to pick up the carte from where it had fallen on the floor, face upwards. "I say, what is this?" he called out to the other officer, who was wide open eyes.

"That is his wife!" replied Captain Vaughan, looking over his comrade's shoulder. "He is not a fool." "Lovely indeed!" replied Mr. Harvey, refusing to let the photograph out of his hand, and gazing at it with the eyes of a connoisseur. "I wonder now that Fairfax turned up his nose at her as you beauties at Calcutta. Now I can understand his contempt for our taste, and the commissaries with which he regarded us when we talked of beauty."

"If anything does happen to him, poor fellow," said Captain Vaughan, nodding toward the patient, "I suppose it will be a terrible blow to her. I don't know how I can't make head or tail of his domestic affairs. You may be sure there is something queer about her or he would never stay out here having a nervous ailment to his wife any more than if she was dead."

"You saw her on board the trooper, Vaughan?" said Mr. Harvey, as he laid his hand on the doctor's shoulder. "I saw her on board the trooper, Vaughan?" said Mr. Harvey, as he laid his hand on the doctor's shoulder. "I saw her on board the trooper, Vaughan?" said Mr. Harvey, as he laid his hand on the doctor's shoulder.

"Much prettier," returned his companion briefly. "Here! you must get on as fast as that all night! We must set to work and write this letter, the mails go down to-morrow morning. I don't half like the job, but you tell me, and if anything does happen to Fairfax, here he winked away an unusual moisture in his bold blue eyes—"I shall be right out up myself."

The two officers, having at length put their heads together, concocted the following letter to Mr. Mayhew: "DEAR SIR, It is with much regret that I inform you of the serious illness of Sir Reginald Fairfax, and I have been desired by the doctor in attendance to prepare you for the gravest consequences. Sir Reginald was wounded by some Ghata after the capture of a village, he having had the foolhardiness to enter their house alone, knowing it to be full of armed men. He has a broken arm, and is only slowly recovering from concussion of the brain caused by a blow on the back of the head; and latterly he has had to contend with a severe attack of nervous fever. I need hardly mention that he has the best attention of my brother-officers and myself, and everything that can be done for him in such a case has been most carefully carried out. We only hope and trust that his yet and vigorous constitution may yet avert them, and that he may be able to return to his wife's address; will you be so good as to break the news to her or forward this letter to her residence. GEORGE VAUGHAN."

No sooner had the above been concluded, closed, and stamped than the patient suddenly woke up in his senses. After languishing for some time, he opened his eyes, and he was looking at his eyes fell on the rifled desk and his wife's photograph. To his great amazement (Captain Vaughan hurriedly replied). "Fairfax, my dear fellow, I know you think we have been guilty of the greatest error; but we had to ferret out your friends about the doctor's orders. 'Had you? Am I so bad as all that?' he asked in a low tone. Receiving no reply, he added, as if to himself: "I suppose I am, I feel very weak and queer, but I must write a line myself," he said, looking at Captain Vaughan's answer.

spurred to ride with Prince Rupert, and saving to having expressed that wish, many a fair acre was shown away from him and his descendants. Nothing in fact was left the next generation but the house and demesne.

A succession of lucky speculations and prudent marriages had enriched the Fairfax race, and Sir Reginald's grandfather, instead of smothering at Arthur's Crookford or White's as was the fashion in his day, being, on the contrary of a thrifty turn of mind, purchased Loozon, a card-playing owner had brought to the hammer, which he then sold to his son-in-law, the Fairfaxs were at least buried at Monkwood, and during the season it was generally visited for woodcock shooting, for which its thick woods were now famous.

Monkwood was a good sized, red brick house, hideous and rambling, and inconvenient to the last degree. It was a rare collection of architecture on a small scale as a room had been added here, a window knocked out there, according to the sweet will of the reigning Fairfax. It was approached by a long drive, skirted on one side by a thick laurel cover, and on the other side by a broad open demesne, dotted about with some splendid timber, oak and copper beech in particular. The house was entered by a shallow flight of steps and heavy portico, leading into a lofty oak-panelled hall, opening on one side into the dining room and tea room, and on the other into the drawing room and library.

The drawing-room side looked out on a grand old fashioned pleasure ground; the dining room "gave" oh horror! on the yard—a yard large enough for a barrow square, with a long range of loose boxes and deserted stalls and coach houses. A couple of saddle horses and Miss Saville's pet ponies, Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee, revelled at least in plenty of room. Upstairs the house was still more old-fashioned than below; fire-places in corners abounded; cupboards lurked out in the strangest places; and there were various passages leading everywhere in general and nowhere in particular, as you angrily discover when, having followed one down to its source as you flatter yourself, you open a fine promising looking door, and find a set of empty shelves staring you in the face! On the other hand you are disagreeably surprised when, on bursting open the door of what you take to be a cupboard, you find yourself precipitated down three steps into a large room. Hugs four post beds and furniture to correspond were de rigneur, and there was an old world feeling about the place altogether, as if it had gone to sleep one hundred years ago, and awoke greatly surprised to find itself in the present century. The furniture would have been the ne plus ultra of luxury in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"[TO BE CONTINUED.] Lindsay, March 23, 1883.

Joseph Maunder, Little Britain.

Richard Sylvester.

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