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...had said, but more of what had occurred during the late afternoon. Mid-night was called by the sentries. He went to his door and looked out on the broad, bleak prairie, the moonlight glinting on the tin roofing of the patch of buildings over at the station far across the dreary level and glistening on the patches of snow that here and there streaked the surface. It was all so cold and calm and still. His blood was hot and fevered. Something invited him to the peace and purity of the night. He threw on his overcoat and furs and strolled over to the gateway, past the silent and deserted store, whose lighted bar and billiard room was generally the last thing to close along Prairie avenue. There was not a glimmer of light about the quarters of the trader or the surgeon's beyond. One or two faint gleams stole through the blinds at the big hospital, and told of the night watch by some fevered bedside. He passed on around the fence and took a path that led to the target ranges north of the post and back of officers' row, thinking deeply all the while; and finally, re-entering the garrison by the west gate, he came down along the hard gravelled walk that passed in circular sweeps the offices and the big house of the colonel commanding, and then bore straight away in front of the entire line.

All was darkness and quiet. He passed in succession the houses of the field officers of the cavalry, looked longingly at the darkened front of Maj. Waldron's cottage, where he had lived so sweet an hour before the setting of the last sun, then went on again and passed surprised in front of Capt. Rayner's. A bright light was still burning in the front room on the second floor. Was she, too, awake and thinking of that interview? He looked wistfully at the lace curtains that shrouded the interior, and then the clank of a cavalry sabre sounded in his ears, and a tall officer came springing across the road.

"Who the devil's that?" was the blunt military greeting.
"Mr. Hayne," was the quiet reply.
"What? Mr. Hayne? Oh! Beg your pardon, man—couldn't imagine who it was mooning around out here after midnight."
"I don't wonder," answered Rayner.
"I am rather given to late hours, and after reading a long time I often take a stroll before turning in."
"Ah, yes; I see. Well, won't you drop in and chat awhile? I'm officer of the day, and have to owl to-night."
"Thanks, no, not this time; I must go to bed. Good night, Mr. Blake."
"Good night to you, Mr. Hayne," said Blake, then stood gazing perplexedly after him. "Now, my fine fellow," was his dissatisfied query, "the hat on earth do you mean by prowling around Rayner's at this hour of the night?"

CHAPTER XI.



PRIVATE CLANCY STRUGGLING IN THE GRASP OF TWO OR THREE SOLDIERS.

It was very generally known throughout Fort Warren by 10 o'clock on the following morning, that Mr. Hayne had returned to duty and was one of the first officers to appear at the matinee. Once more the colonel had risen from his chair, taken him by the hand and welcomed him. This time he expressed the hope that nothing would now occur to prevent their seeing him daily.

"Won't you come into the club room?" asked Capt. Gregg, afterwards. "We will be pleased to have you."
"Excuse me, captain, I shall be engaged all morning," answered Mr. Hayne, and walked on down the row. Nearly all the officers were strolling away in groups of three or four. Hayne walked past them all with quick, soldierly step and almost aggressive manner, and was soon far ahead, all by himself. Finding it an unprofitable subject, there has being little talk between the two regiments as to what Mr. Hayne's status should be on his reappearance. Everybody heard that he had somewhat rudely spurned the advances of Rosa Kelly and his companions. Rosa Kelly had told the story with strong coloring to more than half the denizens of officers' row.

Evidently he desired no further friendship or intercourse with his brother blue straps, and only a few of the cavalry officers found his society attractive. He played delightfully; he was well read; but in general talk he was not entertaining. "Altogether too sepulchral—or at least funeral," explained the cavalry. "He never laughs, and rarely smiles, and he's as glum as a Quaker meeting," was another complaint. So a social success was hardly to be predicted for Mr. Hayne.

other would subject themselves together early; and if he could stand the status quo, why the regiment could; and that, said the Rifles, was the end of the matter.

But it was not the end, by a good deal. Some few of the ladies of the infantry, actuated by Mrs. Rayner's vehement exposition of the case, had aligned themselves on her side as against the post commander, and by their general conduct sought to convey to the colonel and to the ladies who were present at the first dinner given Mr. Hayne, thorough disapproval of their course. This put the cavalry people on their mettle and led to a division in the garrison; and as Maj. Waldron was, in Mrs. Rayner's eyes, equally culpable with the colonel, it resulted that two or three infantry households, together with some unmarried subalterns, were arrayed socially against their own battalion commander, as well as against the grand panjandrum at post headquarters. If it had not been for the determined attitude of Mr. Hayne himself, the garrison might speedily have been resolved into two parties—Hayne and anti-Hayne sympathizers; but the whole bearing of that young man was fiercely repellent of sympathy; he would have none of it. "Hayne's position," said Maj. Waldron, "is practically this; he holds that no man who has borne himself as he has during these few years—denied himself everything that he might make up every cent that was lost, though he was in nowise responsible for the loss—could by any possibility have been guilty of the charges on which he was tried. From this he will not abate one jot or tittle; and he refuses now to restore to his friendship, the men who repudiated him in his years of trouble, except on their profession of faith in his entire innocence."

Now, this was something the cavalry could not do without some impeachment of the evidence which was heaped up against the poor fellow at the time of the trial, and it was something the infantry would not do, because thereby they would virtually pronounce one, at least, of their own officers to have repeatedly and persistently given false testimony. In the case of Waldron and the cavalry, however, it was possible for Hayne to return their calls of courtesy, because they, having never "sent him to Coventry," received him precisely as they would receive any other officer. With the Rifles it was different. Having once "cut" him as though by unanimous accord, and having taught the young officers joining year after year to regard him as a criminal, they could be restored to Mr. Hayne's friendship, as has been said before, only "on confession of error." Buxton and two or three of his stamp, called, or left their cards on Mr. Hayne, because their colonel had so done; but precisely as the ceremony was performed, just so it was returned.

Buxton was red with wrath over what he termed Hayne's conceited and supercilious manner when returning his call. "I called upon him like a gentleman, by thunder, just to let him understand I wanted to help him out of the mire, and told him if there was anything I could do for him that a gentleman could do, not to hesitate about letting me know; and when he came to my house to-day, damned if he didn't patronize me—talked to me about the Plevna siege, and wanted to discuss Gourko and the Balkans or some other fool thing; what in thunder have I to do with campaigns in Turkey?—and I thought he meant those nigger soldiers the British have in India (—Georghs, I know now—and I did tell him it was an awful blunder, that only a Russian would make, to take those Sepoy fellows and put 'em into a winter campaign. Of course I hadn't been looking up the subject, and he had, and sprung it on me; and then, by gad, as he was going, he said he had books and maps he would lend me, and if there was anything he could do for me that a gentleman could do, not to hesitate about asking. Damn his impudence!"

Poor Buxton! One of his idiosyncrasies was to talk wisely to the juniors on the subject of European campaigns and to criticize the moves of generals whose very names and centuries were entangling mazes. His own subalterns were, unfortunately for him, at the house when Hayne called, and when he, as was his wont, began to expound on current military topics. "A little learning," even he had not, and the dangerous thing that would have been supplanted by something quite as bad, if not worse. He was trapped and thrown by the quiet mannered infantry subaltern, and it was all Messrs. Freeman and Royce could do to restrain their impulse to rush after Hayne and embrace him. Buxton was cordially detested by his "subs," and well knew they would tell the story of his defeat, so he made a virtue of necessity and came out with his own version. Therein was far more ludicrous, and, while it made Mr. Hayne famous, he gained another enemy. The—th could not fail to notice how soon after that all social recognition ceased between their bulky captain and the pale, slender subaltern; and Mrs. Buxton and Mrs. Rayner became suddenly infatuated with each other, while their lords were seldom seen except together.

All this time, however, Miss Travers was making friends throughout the garrison. No one ever presumed to discuss the Hayne affair in her presence, because of her relationship to the Rayners, and yet Mr. Waldron had told several people how delightfully she and Mr. Hayne had spent an afternoon together. Did not Mrs. Rayner declare that Miss Waldron was a woman who told everything she knew, or words to that effect? It is safe to say that the garrison was greatly interested in the story. How strange it was that he should have had a tete-a-tete with the sister of his interest foe! When did they meet? Had they met since? Would they meet again? All these were questions eagerly discussed, yet never asked of the parties themselves. Mr. Hayne's reputation for snubbing people standing him in excellent stead, and Miss Travers' quiet dignity and reserve of manner being too much for those who would have given a good deal to gain her confidence. But there was Mrs. Rayner.

She, at least, with all her high and mighty ways, was no unscrupulous creature when it came to snubbing out those who stood against her. Her conduct, so far from being unbecomingly modest, as she would have it be, was in fact, a masterpiece of cunning and self-interest.

It was Capt. Rayner himself who interpreted the case, and forbade her upbraiding Nellie any further. Nellie being either in an adjoining room or up in her own on several occasions when these queries were propounded to her sister, it goes without saying that that estimable woman, after the manner of her sex, had elevated her voice in responding, so that there was no possibility of the wicked girl's falling to get full benefits of the scolding she deserved. Rayner had indeed positively forbidden her further rebuking Nellie; but the man does not live who can prevent one woman's pushing another so long as she can get within earshot, and Miss Travers was paying dearly for her independence.

It cannot be estimated just how great a disappointment was it to the frumpier and more reserved sister, since she was going to stop young lady, simply because she kept her own counsel. These were women in the garrison who longed to take her to their hearts; she was so sweet and winning, they said; but how could they when her sister would recognize them only by the oddest possible nod? Nellie was not happy, that was certain, though she made no complaint, and though the young officers who were daily her devotees declared she was bright and attractive as she could be. There were still frequent dances and parties in the garrison; but March was nearly spent, and the weather had been so vile and blustering that they could not move beyond the limits of the post. April might bring a change for the better in the weather, but Miss Travers wondered how it could better her position.

It is hard for a woman of spirit to be materially dependent on any one, and Miss Travers was virtually dependent on her brother-in-law. The little share of her father's hard savings was spent on her education. Once free from school, she was bound to another apprenticeship, and sister Kate, though indulgent, fond and proud, lost no opportunity of telling her how much she owed to Capt. Rayner. It got to be a fearful weight before the first summer was well over. It was the main secret of her acceptance of Mr. Van Antwerp. And now, until she would consent to name the day that should bind her for life to him, she had no home but such as Kate Rayner could offer her. There was just one chance to end it now and forever, and to relieve her sister and the captain of the burden of her support. Could she make up her mind to do it? And Mr. Van Antwerp offered the opportunity.

So far from hesitating with her, as she half expected—so far from being even angry and unpropitious on receiving the letter she had written telling him all about her meetings with Mr. Hayne—she had written again and again, reproaching himself for his doubts and fears, begging her forgiveness for having written and telegraphed to Kate, muzzling himself before her in the most abject way, and imploring her to reconsider her determination and to let him write to Capt. and Mrs. Rayner to return to their eastern home at once, that the marriage might take place forthwith and he could bear away to Europe in May. Letter after letter came, eager, imploring, full of tenderest love and devotion, full of the saddest apprehension, never reproaching, never doubting, never commanding or restraining. The man had found the way to touch a woman of her generous nature; he had left all to her; he was at her mercy, and she knew well that she loved her ferrely and that to see her would well nigh break his heart. Could she say the word and be free? Surely, as this man's wife these words were not so serious; and, yet, could she wed a man for whom she felt no spark of love?

They went down to the creek one fine morning early in April. There had been a sudden thaw of the snows up the gorges of the Rockies, and the stream had overlapped its banks, spread over the low lands and flooded some broad depressions in the prairie. Then, capricious as a woman's moods, the wind whistled around the lakelets in a band of ice. The skating was gorgeous, and all the pretty ankles on the post were re-joicing in the opportunity before the setting in of another winter. Coming homeward at luncheon time Mrs. Rayner, Mrs. Buxton, Miss Travers and one or two others, escorted by a squad of bachelors, strolled somewhat slowly along Prairie avenue towards the store. It so happened that the married ladies were foremost in the little party, when who should meet them but Mr. Hayne, coming from the east gate! Mrs. Rayner and Mrs. Buxton, though passing him almost elbow to elbow, looked straight ahead or otherwise avoided his eye. He raised his forage cap in general acknowledgment of the presence of ladies with the officers, but glanced coldly from one to the other until his blue eyes lighted on Miss Travers.

No woman in that group could fail to note the leap of sunshine and gladness to his face, the instant that they rose to his cheek. Miss Travers herself saw it quickly, and did the maiden walking just behind her, and her heart bounded at the sight. She bowed as their eyes met, spoke his name in low tone, and strove to hide her face from Mr. Blake, who turned completely around and stole a sudden glance at her. She could no more account for this she could control it, but her face was burning. Mrs. Rayner, too, looked around and stared at her, but this she met firmly, her dark eyes never quivering before the angry glare in her sister's. Blake was beginning to Mr. Hayne and to his sister, Mrs. Rayner, and he always did like mischief. "You owe me a grudge, Miss Travers, if you did not know it," he said, so that all could hear.

"Yes, Mr. Blake! How can that be possible?" "I spoiled a serenade for you a few nights ago. I was officer of the day, and caught sight of a man gazing up at your window after midnight. I felt sure he was going to sing; so like a good fellow, I ran over to play an accompaniment, and then—he wouldn't sing, after all."

She was white now. Her eyes were gazing almost imploringly at him. Something warned him to hold his peace, and he broke off short. "Was it! Oh do tell me, Mrs. Blake!" were the exclamations. Mrs. Rayner being most impetuous in her demand. Again Blake caught the appeal in Miss Travers' eyes.

"That's what I want to know," he responded, mendaciously. When I woke up next morning, the whole thing was a dream, and I couldn't fix the fellow at all."
There was a chorus of disappointment and indignancy. The idea of spilling such a gem of a sensation! But Blake took it all completely until he got home. Then it began to worry him.

Was it possible that she knew he was there?
That night there was a disturbance in the garrison. Just after 10 o'clock, and while the sentries were calling off the hour, a woman's shrieks and cries were heard over behind the quarters of Company B and close to the cottage occupied by Lieut. Hayne. The officers of the guard ran to the spot with several men, and found Private Clancy struggling and swearing in the grasp of two or three soldiers, while Mrs. Clancy was imploring them not to let him go—he was wild like again; it was drink; he had the horrors; and was batin' her while she was trying to get him home. And Clancy's appearance bore out her words. He was wild and drunken, but he swore he meant no harm; he struggled hard for freedom; he vowed he only wanted to see the Lieutenant at his quarters; and Mr. Hayne, lamp-in-hand, had come upon the scene and was striving to quiet the woman, who only screamed and protested the louder. At his quiet order the soldiers released Clancy, and the man stood patient and subordinate.

"Did you want to see me, Clancy?" asked Mr. Hayne.
"Askin' yer pardon sir, I did," began the man, unsteadily, and evidently struggling with the fumes of the liquor he had been drinking; but before he could speak again, Mrs. Clancy's shrieks rang out on the still air.

"Oh, for the love of God, how'd him, some o' ye! He'll kill him! He's mad, I say, Shure, 'is I that know him best. Oh, blessed Virgin, save us! Don't let him loose. Mister Foster!" she screamed to the officer of the guard, who at that moment appeared on the full run.

"What's the trouble?" he asked, breathlessly.
"Clancy seems to have been drinking, and wants to talk with me about something. Mr. Foster," said Hayne, quietly, "He belongs to my company and I will be responsible that he goes home. It is really Mrs. Clancy that is making all the trouble."
"Oh, for the love of God, hear him, now, when the man was tearin' the hair o' me this minute! Oh, how'd him, men! Shure 'tis Capt. Rayner wud niver let him go."
"What's the matter, Mrs. Clancy?" spoke a quick, stern voice, and Rayner, with face white as a sheet, suddenly stood in their midst.
"Oh, God be praised, it's here ye are, captain! Shure 'tis Clancy, sir, drunk, sir, and runnin' round the garrison, and lathin' me, sir."
"Take him to the guard house, Mr. Foster," was the stern, sudden order.
"Not a word, Clancy," as the man strove to speak. "Off with him, and if he gives you any trouble, send for me."
And as the poor fellow was led away, silence fell upon the group. Mrs. Clancy began a wail of mingled relief and misery, which the captain ordered her to cease and go home. More men came (Continued on seventh page.)

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