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A STORY OF MILITARY LIFE IN INDIA.

....BY MAVOR ALLAN....

CHAPTER V.

at its fairest on a glorious evening at the end of April, when the mail packet from Portsmouth steamed across the Solent towards Ryde Pier.

The green verdure of budding summer lay thickly on the far-stretching landscape and the tall trees dotted through the island town, rising so picturesquely upward from the sea, and capped by the lofty spire of the parish church.

The long promenade pier was gay with holiday makers, and eastward, the esplanade was bright with patches of spring flowers; while the soft melody of a brass band floated fitfully out over the azure sea.

There were two travelers on board the steamer who regarded the fair scene before them with enraptured eyes, for they were bride and bridegroom on their wedding tour-Roddy and Diana Gordon-and the veriest desert must have seemed a paradise to them in the all-satisfying happiness which union had brought to both. But the fashionable Ryde was not to be their destination.

Their young love as yet demanded the charm of solace of solitude, and it was southward, towards the great binff white cliffs and the silver strands of Shanklin the island train was soon swiftly bearing them, to the rose-covered cottage which was to hold for them the first mystic name of Lone.

Home! What a talisman lay in that simple word! And as the young soldier led his happy bride across the threshold his heart swelled with gratitude to the God who had shielded him through perils of pain and bitter bloodshed in far India, to bring him to this haven of peace and perfect love at last.

And presently, as they lingered over dinner, rejuctant to bring to an end that first delicious repast shared in their Eden together, they spoke of Don over whose welfare they yearned with all the tender sympathy born of their own happiness and large-hearted love.

Roddy had brought round his dessert plate and sat down by Diana's side, ostensibly to invite her to peel his walnuts, a task of which Roddy himself had no aptitude; but another diversion occurred by the arrival of the post, the last mail for the night.

One letter was from Don, which had been posted to Gadie Ha' and now forwarded by Roddy's father. And as Roddy tore it open and scanned its contents an exciamation of pleasure passed his lips.

"There, little wife, didn't I predict he said triumphantly. And forthwith he read aloud a few hasty lines Don had penned to Roddy on the night of his betrothal to Lillie Derwent, previous to his departure for the camp of the Tirah force.

It was a wonderfully bright letter for Don, full of congratulation on Roddy's forthcoming marriage and calm satis- eternal death." faction in his own engagement; and it ended with a postscript that stirred both Di and Roddy to the heart,

"I begin to think, old fellow, perhaps you are right, and life is worth living after all."

arm stole round her waist, and he drew her head to his shoulder and lightly touched its auburn locks with his libs.

"You are satisfied now, little woman, that Lillie has met her real 'hero' at

She looked up in his laughing eyes with a tender smile, for she knew be was thinking of a time when she believed Lillie to be his own only love, and she answered with contrite sweet-

would only trust Him to shape our be sure to see him on receipt of that," lives as He knows best!"

The silence of a deep content fell out to where the great chalk cliffs rose in dazzling whiteness up from the sea into the blue sky, over which the silvery stars of night were coming out of fire.

Behind them reared the rugged stretch of undercliff, down the wooded; were spreading their gorgeous plumes precipice of which the murmuring stream meandered from village to out upon it from this same window. shore, and by whose side ran a series. of gigantic steps-a mighty precipice that savored almost of Alpine sub-

limity. The levers-for they were lovers ktill-stood hand-in-hand and drank in the beauty of it all with that rapture" brilliant butterflies, sailing through the which only comes when viewing some scene in the presence of one we love.

Even Gadie, lovely Gadie, with its silvery, shining waters was forgotten. They were here together, and it was the paradise of the world.

on the deep ocean, the thoughts of each would turn to Don; and once Diana spoke, with a wistful little break in her voice.

"Surely, Roddy, you will forgive and forget the past now, and Lillie will bring him back to us once more?"

"Ah, surely, for "My ladye fair can rule my soul,

And every thought and deed control. The fair Isle of Wight was looking | Roddy quoted gaily. Then, with tender passion, he clasped the hand he held still tighter, and spoke more gravely What was that line you repeated a moment ago, Di?"

"The waters swell before a boister-

ous storm; but leave it all to God." As they slowly made their way along the esplanade homeward, the newspaper boys were calling the evening edition of the London papers, which had just arrived from Ryde by the last mail for the night, and Roddy called an urchin to his side, his cheek paling involuntarily as the lusty shout caught his ear: "Rebel firing into Bara Camp. British officer killed; orderly wound-

He hastily opened the sheet and stood still under a gas lamp to scan its columns; whilst Diana, with anxious eyes, looked over his shoulder, For, peaceful as it had been on the Indian frontier for some months now, her thoughts were ever quick to fly to Don and Lillie's father, of whom any hour might bring disastrous news.

A hoarse exclamation burst from the lips of both as, simultaneously, husband and wife caught sight of the fatal paragraph.

The name of the officer was Capt. Derwent of the Gordon Highlanders!

And far, far away the red Afghan sun had set amid somber clouds above the snow-clad summits of Tirah and the white tents of the British camp in the Bara Strath.

There had been rain and thunder all day, and the clouds had gathered in dense masses, edged by the radiance of the hidden moon. And athwart the clouds now and then ahot gleams of vivid lightning, falling with weird solemplty upon a coffin, draped with the Union Jack, carried shoulder high by stalwart Highlanders.

, ne cortege was preceded by pipers playing the low and wailing dirge of "Lochaber no more," and followed by a string of officers and soldiers wearing long, spectral-like cloaks, and walking with slow steps and heads downbent.

Soon-ah, how soon!--it was all over, and all that was left of their gallant comrade was committed to that lonely nullah, "In sure and certain hope of the resurrection of eternal

No farewell shots were fired; but the captain's own detachment presented arms, and the pipers awoke the dim valley once more with their pibroch; but it was "The Land o' the Leal" now that they played.

And as Don Gordon turned from that lonely grave, and pictured the image of her who held the dead so dear, for one wild moment he felt he would sooner, far sooner lie there, too, than face the anguish of Lillie's pure eyes; while in his heart rang the chaplain's words, like the cry of a lost soul:

"Deliver us not into the pains of

CHAPTER VI.

It had been a morning of languorous heat, and now noon-the long, breathless Indian noon-was at its meridian, when, on a day in May, Don Gordon Happy tears had sprung to Diana's arrived at Rawal Pindi and rode out dark eyes, and, seeing them, Roddy's under a burning sun to Lillie Derwent's house.

The durwan met him with evident surprise and the intimation that "the gates were closed" (polite Hindostani for "not at home"), and for an instant Don's heart stood still, with a vague fear of he knew not what.

Then suddenly he remembered it was the hour of siesta, a time when visits are never paid in India; and, reassured, he dismounted from his horse, and, presenting his card with the ob-"Ah, Roddy, how good God is, if we servation that "the memsahib would he passed through the vestibule with masterful step, and went unannounced upon them, and by and by they strolled | into the drawing room to await Lillie's

How long he waited he knew not. He walked to the window and noted, as the mind will note the veriest trifles one by one, twinkling like tiny globes at moments of tense excitement, that the great adjutant birds were still dozing in the sunshine, and the peacocks on the terrace, as when last he looked

The oleander, with its clusters of pink; the baubel, with its perfumed bells of gold; the jasmine and acacia, luxuriant in their wild beauty; the blue jays and the crested yellow sparrows, fitting from shrub to shrub; the voiceless air-all was unchanged, only the fair Indian home would know its master never more.

Never more! There was something asperated at his wife's extravagance, terrible in the conviction, something appailing to Don to remember that Yet ever and anon, as they gazed out | death, chill and stern and awful, lay beyond this warm young world of budding beauty.

> A sharp groan fell from his lips. stified even as it escaped them; for the portiere had rustled, and he turned quickly to find he was no longer alone. Lattle had come to him just as she had risen from her siesta. Her golden hair, let loose for coolness, streamed

over her white muslin robe, and round her waist was a broad sash of black ribbon, the sight of which sent a fresh pang to her lover's heart.

"A great sorrow nobly borne is great dignity." As Don looked at her he realized, almost with a feeling of awe, that such dignity had fallen upon Lillie now. The dire calamity she had so dreaded had come to pass, yet she had not sunk beneath the blow.

The passion of her grief was spent and resignation had come. Anguish had left its pallor on her cheek, but the

hopelessness of despair was not past. Don looked at her, marveling at her fortitude and calm; then the next instant his arms were closing round her like a vise and straining her to his beating heart, for her calm had given way, and she had flown to the shelter of his embrace, with a tender, sobbing cry.

"Oh, Don, Don, my all on earth

now!" she cried. He held her tight, and kissed her again and again. It was as if he dreaded the moment might come when he should never hold her thus any more, and he was drinking to the full this embittered cup of bliss. Presently she withdrew herself, for there was something almost fierce in the fervor of his caresses. She sank on a divan, and put out her hand to him to sit by her.

"Tell me," she said faintly, "all about it."

And Don told her, with low voice and averted eyes that story which the press paragraphs, so comprehensive, yet so cruel in their brevity, had already burnt like a searing iron into heart and brain.

It was shortly before the mess-hour. Several successive shots had been heard in the valley, and two had penetrated one of the mess tents and wounded an orderly whilst in the act of laying a table. Captain Derwent and himself were returning from a stroll along the banks of the nullah, when a bullet whizzed between them which struck Captain Derwent, and he dropped instantly at the narrator's feet, shot through the heart.

Every effort was being made to track the perpetrator of the crime and avenge the captain's death; but so far the rebels had escaped.

"And you yourself were the only one near when he died?" she said, through the tears which were now streaming silently down her pallid, lovely face.

"Yes. And owing to the dense undergrowth, it was impossible for me to follow the direction the shot came from. Directly he fell I did my atmost to stop the bleeding; but I saw at once it was useless. Death had been instantaneous. I got help from the camp then, and we carried him down to his tent. Next night we buried him close to where he fell." Den's voice was husky and strained, and suddenly, at sight of his ill-concealed emotion, she checked her tears and laid her golden head upon his shoulder with a trustful tenderness that went to his

"My poor Don! how yon, too, must have suffered!"

He caught her to him with a passionate caresa, all the more passionate because the thought assailed him how once not love, but mere ambition, had urged him to lay siege to this confid-

"I have suffered," he said, very low, "more than I can say, Lillie." She looked up in his face and saw

that he spoke truly

His brow was lined and his cheek pate; his brown eyes had a haggard look she had never seen in them; and, remembering with a great rush of loy. he, too, might have never come back from that wild pass which had made her fatherless she returned his embrace with all the sweet naivete of a child who clung now to her sole protector.

(To be continued.)

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