

received. Good night to you, sir."

And, to Mullane's utter amaze and confusion, quickly followed by an explosion of wrath, Captain Barclay coolly turned and walked within doors.

"Hold on there!" cried Mullane, as he started to spring up the steps, but Barclay stepped in front of him, and Hodges nervously grabbed his arm. Neither knew much of the "code" of the old days, but each had learned that Barclay rarely made a mistake. Winn, too, tall and strong, stepped in front of the angry Irishman as he broke out into expletives. "No more of that here, captain," he cried, forgetful of any consideration of rank. "This noise will wake the post. Rest assured your principal will get all the fight he wants," and then, with growing wrath, for Mullane was struggling to come to the steps, "so will you, by God, if you advance another foot."

"Winn—Winn, for heaven's sake, I say!" cried Barclay, seizing the uplifted arm. "Go home, Mullane. Don't it, you're in no shape to handle such a matter tonight. Go home, or I swear I'll call the officer of the day. He's coming now," he exclaimed, and it was true, for the sound of excited voices had reached the adjoining quarters, and out from the doorway, dashed and belted, came the massive form of Captain Blythe, his saber clanking on the door sill. Out, too, from Winn's hallway shot a broad beam of light, and hastening along the porch came a tall, graceful form in some clinging rose tinted wrapper, all ribboned and fluffy and feminine. The men fell away, and Mullane drew back as Mrs. Winn scurried to her husband's side and laid her white hand on his arm. Forth again on the other side of Winn came Barclay, and his deep tones broke the sudden silence.

"Captain Mullane, leave this spot instantly," he ordered, stern and low. "I'll answer to you in the morning."

"Come out of this, Mullane," demanded Blythe, striding in at the gate. "Delay one second and I'll order you under arrest."

Up slowly went Mullane's cap with the same incomparable sweep. "In the presence of ladies," said he, "I'm disarmed. Captain Barclay, I'll see you in the mornin'."

But when the mornin' came both Mullane and his principal, besides bewildering headaches, had graver matters to deal with than even a very pretty quarrel.

CHAPTER IX.

From the night of her brilliant appearance at the garrison ball, not once had Mrs. Winn an opportunity to exchange a dozen words with Captain Barclay. Her husband, as has been said, had failed to call on his new next door neighbor, although Winn had been well enough to be about for several days, and until he did call it was impossible for Barclay to enter their doors, and expedient that he should avoid Mrs. Winn wherever it was possible to do so. This might not have been difficult, even though the same roof covered both households—that of the Winn on the south and that of the Barclay-Brayton combination on the north side—but for Laura Winn herself, who seemed to be out on the porch every afternoon as the captain came walking back from stables, and the women who were apt to gather at Mrs. Blythe's at that time declared that there was something actually inviting, if not imploring, in the way Mrs. Winn would watch for him, and bow and seem to hover where he could hardly avoid speaking to her. Three times at least since that memorable party had she been there "on watch," as Mrs. Faulkner expressed it, and though his bow was courtesy itself, and his "Good evening, Mrs. Winn," most respectful, and even kindly, if one could judge by the tone of his voice, not another word did he speak. He passed on to his own gateway, Brayton generally at his side, and his stable dress was changed for parade uniform or dinner before he again made his appearance.

After the manner of the day, most of the cavalry contingent stopped in at the clubroom on the way back from evening stables. Brayton used to do so, but though no one could say his captain had preached to him on the subject, some influence either of word or of example had taken effect, and the young bachelor seemed entirely content to cut the club and the social tittle and to trudge along by his new companion's side. They had been getting "mighty thick" for captain and second lieutenant, said some of the others, but, serenely indifferent to what others said, the two kept on their way.

"Thought you were going to wear mourning for Lawrence the rest of your natural life, Brayton, and here you are tyn to Barclay as if Lawrence had never lived," said Mr. Bralligan only a day or two before Lawrence's return, and Brayton started almost as though stung. What Bralligan said was not half as ill grounded as most of his statements, and Brayton was conscious of something akin to guilt and self reproach. In common with most of the regiment, he had felt very sore over Lawrence's going. He had been much attached to that gallant and soldierly captain, but now that another had taken his place and he could compare or contrast the two the younger began to realize with something like a pang of distress, as though it were disloyal to think so, that in many ways Barclay was "head and shoulders" the superior man. Lawrence never rose till 8 o'clock except when in the field. Lawrence rarely read anything but the papers and interminable controversies over the war. Lawrence, despite the claims of Ada and little Jimmy, often spent an evening at the club and always stopped there on his way from stables. Lawrence never studied and off the drill ground never taught. Indeed almost all the drills the troop had known for months and months Barclay himself had conducted. No wonder the boy had wasted hours of valuable time. No wonder there was a little game going on among the youngsters in Brayton's "back parlor" many

a day. He had simply been started into wrong.

But even before Barclay's books were unpacked the new captain had found means to interest the young fellow in professional topics that Lawrence had never seemed to mention. Barclay had evidently been taking counsel with progressive soldiers before joining his new regiment, had been reading books of their choosing and, among others, was a valuable treatise on the proper method of biting horses, and he found that here was a matter that Lawrence and Brayton had never thought of and that Brayton said was never taught them at the Point, was strictly true.

To the amaze and unspeakable indignation of Denny Sullivan, who was soon to be overhauled on graver points, the doughboy had taken his lieutenant from horse to horse in the troop as they stood at rest during drill and shown him at least 20 bits out of the 45 in line that were not fit at all. He showed him some that were too broad from bar to bar and that slid to and fro in the tortured creature's mouth; others that hung too low, almost "fell through;" others whose curb chain or strap, instead of fitting in the groove, bore savagely on the delicate bones above it and tormented the luckless charger every time his rider drew rein. Barclay gave the boy his own carefully studied handbook. Not another cavalry officer then at Worth had read it, though several had heard of it. The youngster was set to work fitting new bits by measurement to the mouth of every horse in the troop.

Then Barclay drew him into the discussion of the cavalry system of saddling as then prescribed—the heavy tree set away forward close to the withers—and Brayton could only say that "that was tactics and the way they'd always done it." But Galahad pointed out that the tactics then in use were written of a foreign dragon saddle with a long flat bearing surface. It was all very well for that to be set as far forward as it would go, because even then the center of gravity of the rider would be well back on the horse. "But," said he, "you take this short McClellan tree, place that away forward, and then set a man in it. His center of gravity will rest in front of the center of motion of the horse—will throw the weight on the forehead and use up his knees and shoulders in no time." This, too, set Brayton to studying and thinking, while Mullane and Fellows declared Sir Galahad a crank, and even Brooks and Blythe, wedded to tradition, thought him visionary. Then when the books came Galahad unpacked, and just where the poker table used to stand it stood now, but it was covered with beautiful maps of Alsace and Lorraine, and Galahad's desk with pamphlets sent him from abroad, the earliest histories of the memorable campaign about Metz and Sedan.

The next thing Brayton knew he was as deeply interested as his captain, and, lo, other men came to look and wonder and go off shaking their heads—those of them who were of the Mullane persuasion sneering at those "book generals," while others, like Blythe, pulled up a chair as invited and followed the junior captain through his modest explanation with appreciative eyes. Those were days when there was all too little time for study and improvement, thanks to the almost incessant Indian scouting required, but here was Worth, a big post, and here was a four troop battalion with a gentleman and not a bad soldier at its head, and it had not occurred to him to teach them anything or to require of them anything beyond the usual attention to stables, troop drill, and an occasional parade. If his men were reasonably ready to take the field in pursuit of Kiowa, Comanche or horse thief, and to furnish escort for ambulance and train when the disbursing officers went to and fro, that was all that could be expected of him or them in those halcyon days. And now "this blasted doughboy substitute" had come down here and was proposing to stir them all up, make them all out "so many ignoramuses," said Mullane. "Bedad, the thing is revolutionary!" And that was enough to damn it, for revolution is a thing no Irishman will tolerate, when he doesn't happen to be in it himself.

Still another thing had occurred to make Barclay something apart from the bachelors. No sooner had his modest kit of household goods arrived than the unused kitchen of Brayton's quarters was fitted up; Hannibal was ensconced therein. A neat little dining room was made of what had been designed for a small bedchamber on the ground floor, and Barclay amazed the mess by setting forth champagne the last evening he dined there as a member, and then retired to the privacy of his own establishment, as he had at Sanders.

The Winn's housemaid had of course dropped in to see how Hannibal was getting along and dropped out to tell her discoveries, which were few. Then Brayton found the mess saying things about Barclay he could not agree with, and he, too, resigned and became a messmate of his captain—a change for the better that speedily manifested itself in the healthy white of his clear eyes and a complexion that bore no trace of fiery stimulants such as were indulged in elsewhere. Then there was talk of others leaving the "Follansbee family" and asking to join at Brayton's, and this gave umbrage to Erin as represented in the bachelors' mess, and so an anti-Barclay feeling had sprung up at the post, among the unlettered at least, and these were days in which the unlettered were numerous. "Sorry for you, Brayton, me boy," grinned the senior sub of Fellows' troop. "It must be tough to come down to this after Lawrence." And he was amazed at Brayton's reply.

"Tough? Yes, for it shows me how much time I've wasted."

"Wait till we get Galahad out on the trail wid his newfangled bits on seats," sneered Mullane but a day or

without an attempt to detect the traitor. That vigilant dame had more than once brought graceless skylarkers to terms and the quadrupedante patrem sonitu of Fuller's mustang represented to her incensed and virtuous ears only the mad lark of some scapegrace subaltern, who perchance had not been as attentive to Manda as he should have been, and she was out of dreamland and over at the window before Fuller fairly drew rein.

"What is it, Brooks, me boy?" asked Frazier from his casement, as did gallant O'Dowd of his loyal Dobbin. "I'll be down in a minute." By the time he

reached the door Fuller had hurried up his stiff and wearied scouts, and in the presence of a little party of officers the story was told again, and told without break or variation. There was only one opinion. The scattered outlaws had easily got wind of the coming of the paymaster with his unusual amount of treasure, and, quickly assembling, they were heading away to meet him far to the southeast of the big post, very possibly planning to ambuscade the party in the winding defiles of the San Saba hills. Not a moment was to be lost. For the first time the full weight of his divorce from all that was once his profession and his pride fell on Ned Lawrence, as for an instant the colonel's eyes turned to him as of old—the dashing and successful leader of the best scouts sent from Worth in the last two years. Then, as though suddenly realizing that he had no longer that arm to lean on, old Frazier spoke:

"Why, Brooks, you'll have to go. I can't trust such a command to Mullane, and it'll take two companies at least." And 20 minutes later, answering the sharp questions of their veteran sergeants, the men of Mullane's and Barclay's troops were tumbling out of their bunks and into their boots, "hell bent for a rousin ride," and the old captain of Troop D was saying to the new: "Captain Barclay, may I ask you for a mount? I've been longing for two years past for a whack at this very gang, and now that the chance has come I cannot stay here and let my old troop go."

And all men present marked the moment of hesitation, the manner of reluctance, before Barclay gravely answered, "There is nothing at my disposal to which you are not most welcome, Colonel Lawrence, and yet—do you think—you ought to go?"

"I could not stay here, sir, and see my old troop go without me,"

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"What is it, sergeant?" asked two or three voices at once.

"I was looking for the officer of the day, sir. Is he here?"

"Over at his quarters, probably. What's amiss?"

"There's two of Fuller's men out from Crockett—just about play dead. They swear that not an hour after we set the whole Friday gang—it come have been anything else—came a- out from the foothills over toward Wild Rose and kept on to the southeast. They saw the dust against the sky and hid in the rocks away off to the east of the trail, and they swear there must have been 50 of 'em at least."

He had hardly time to finish the words when the sutler himself came galloping over the parade, "hot foot" on his wily mustang and drew up in front of the gate. "Has the sergeant told you?" he asked breathlessly. "It's Reed and his partner, two of the best men on my ranch, and they can't be mistaken. You know what it must mean, gentlemen. The gang is after the paymaster, and I think Colonel Frazier should know at once." No wonder Fuller was breathless, bareheaded and only half dressed. Anywhere from \$30,000 to \$40,000 might be diverted from its proper and legitimate use if that Friday gang should overpower the guard and get away with it. His coffers were filled with sutler checks redeemable in currency at the pay table, as was the vaunted way of the old army. It was a case of feast or famine with Fuller, and he poured his tale into sympathetic ears. Brooks himself went over to the colonel's and found that weasel of a chief already awake.

Mrs. Frazier didn't allow galloping over her parade to the dead of the night

without an attempt to detect the traitor. That vigilant dame had more than once brought graceless skylarkers to terms and the quadrupedante patrem sonitu of Fuller's mustang represented to her incensed and virtuous ears only the mad lark of some scapegrace subaltern, who perchance had not been as attentive to Manda as he should have been, and she was out of dreamland and over at the window before Fuller fairly drew rein.

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