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1895—April 18, October 16, December 12.
1896—February 18, April 17, October 9, Dec. 11.
Zala A. Church and S. M. Ellwood, Judges.

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Nightwatch.....L. M. BAER
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took a form more difficult to see and even in a frontier, old time garrison to hear of.

What Mrs. Frazier was not prepared to see was Mrs. Blythe in frequent confidential chat with the officer whom the colonel's wife chose to consider her own invalid. She had always fancied Mrs. Blythe before, but now she met her with that indescribable tone suggestive of unmerited yet meekly, womanfully borne injury, which is so superior to either explanation or resentment. Mrs. Winn was frequently on her piazza chatting with Mr. Brayton or Dr. "Fannybone," as the wits of the post had designated Collabone's right bower, "who has more brains in one head," said Collabone, "than the mess has in ten," but she greeted Mrs. Frazier with an austere and distant dignity even more pronounced than Mrs. Frazier's manner to Mrs. Blythe, which plainly showed that Laura had not "been raised in the army for nothing," and that she had a will and temper and pluck that would brook no airs and tolerate no aspersions on Mrs. Frazier's part.

Aspersions there had been, for her friend Mrs. Faulkner had not failed in that sisterly duty which so many women so reluctantly yet faithfully perform, and everything Mrs. and the Misses Frazier had even hinted and some things they even had uttered were duly conveyed to Laura's ears. She was angered at the Fraziers for daring to say such things, at Mrs. Faulkner for daring to repeat them and at Barclay for daring to keep her beyond the possibility of their being true. Never before had she known what it was to strive for a look or word of admiration and to meet utter indifference, yet those blue eyes of Barclay's had once fairly burned with passionate delight in her girlish beauty, and his words had trembled with their weight of love for her. No other woman, she believed, had yet come into his life and banished all memory of her, and now that her beauty was but the ripper for her years she rebelled in her soul against the whisper that it could no longer move him.

Wedded though she was to Harry Winn, loving him after the fashion of her shallow nature so long as there was no man at the post from whom she sought to exact homage, she had time and again within the year felt toward her husband a sense of injury. What business had he had to woo her if he was so poor? What right had he to subject her to the annoyance of dunning letters, of suggestive inquiries on the



Mrs. Winn was frequently on her piazza chatting with Mr. Brayton.

part of her neighbors? Why should she submit to parsimonious skipping and cheeseparing, to living with only one servant when several other women had two, to all the little shifts and meannesses poor Harry had declared to be necessary? It was his business to provide for her needs. Her father had always supported her in style; why couldn't Harry do the same? True, she knew when she married him he had nothing but his pay. He told her everything, but she had never taken thought for the morrow, though she had taken perhaps too much thought of what she should wear or eat or drink. Laura loved the good things of this life and had been freely indulged throughout her petted girlhood, and now, in the days when every woman seemed turning against her, purse, cellar and larder were empty and her husband gone on a stupid foray to the mountains. None could say when he would return or what new sorrow would meet him then. Other men managed to earn money or make money somehow outside their pay. Why should she, whose tastes, she said, were so much more refined, be mated with one who could only spend?

There is a time when many a homely face becomes radiant with a beauty too deep for fallow skin or heavy features to hide and when a really winsome face becomes well nigh angelic, but even as Laura Winn bent over her sleeping child or nestled the unconscious little one in her bosom the sullen fire of discontent, thwarted ambition and wounded self love smoldered in her deep, slumberous eyes. There were hours now when Baby Winn was left to the scant care of the household nurse, while the mother took the air upon the piazza during the day or fitted about from parlor to parlor along the row at night. She was restless, nervous, as all could see. She frequently assailed Brayton with queries for news, always

deceitfully asking first if come and come or were expected from the command staff, yet speedily coming back to the real object of her constant thoughts, the now much honored officer, her next door neighbor. For three days after he was pronounced able to sit up she did not succeed in seeing him at all, though so many other and, it should be explained, much older women did, but that did not abate one whit her determination that he should speedily see her.

Just what her object was she herself could not have told. It was an instinct, an impulse, a whim perhaps, but he who had been her lover and was rejected had dared to gaze into her face with eyes serene and untroubled, had met her but half veiled references to old days with polite but positive indifference. She had nothing to ask of him, she told herself. She meant no disloyalty to Harry, no wrong of any kind. Not a bit of it. She had treated Barclay very badly. She had done him a wrong that was much greater in her own estimation than it was in that of any one of her neighbors, among whom the women at least considered the loss of his inamorata a blessing in disguise, but Laura fully believed that Barclay's heart must have been crushed in the depth of his woe, and that it was now her duty to make friends again—perhaps in some way to console him, not, of course, in any way to which Harry could object; not, of course, in any way to which the post ought to object, but—well, even to herself, as has been said, she could not entirely and satisfactorily explain her motive. It was impossible therefore that she could hope to do so to anybody else, and yet she had dared to write to him. It was only a little note, and yet with all its inconsistencies it said so much:

DEAR CAPTAIN BARCLAY—I cannot tell you my distress at hearing of your again being severely wounded, especially at a time when I had hoped to have you meet and better know my husband, but now in his distressing absence I, who more than any woman at this post am anxious to show my sympathy and sorrow, am practically helpless. Do tell me if there is anything I can do, though I am sure I can't see what is left for me, with no cook or kitchen, and Mrs. Frazier and the Misses Frazier sending such loads of things. I really envy them and Mrs. Blythe the privilege of their years in going to see you personally, for am I not at least your oldest friend? L. W.

This ingenious note was sent by Hannibal at an hour when the captain was alone, and when, had he been disposed, he might have hobbled to the door and answered in person; but hobbled he did not, nor did he answer until after long thought. He received the little missive with surprise, read it without a tremor of hand or lip, but with something of shame and pity that overspread his face like a cloud. Was he any longer beginning to know her, after all?

Pray do not give my scratch a thought—he answered in writing late that afternoon—and believe, my dear Mrs. Winn, that I have every comfort that one can possibly desire. Every one is most kind. I expect to be out with my men in a week and shall be delighted to take the field and send Mr. Winn back to you forthwith. Most sincerely,

And that was how, with polite but positive indifference, he had treated her reference to old times and old friends. Shallow as she was, Laura Winn was deep enough to see that he meant to hold himself far aloof from her. He could hardly have told her more plainly he would have none of her. He had even dared to say it would be a pleasure to go that he might send her husband back to her arms. And this was the man she once thought she loved, the man who, she believed, adored her and would never outlive the passion of his sorrow at losing her.

Even now the foolish heart of the woman might have accepted its lesson, but it was time for friends again to come, and as Laura expressed it, "pry and prod and preach," and that brought on a climax.

Mrs. Faulkner had dropped in and dropped out again, and Laura, who seemed forever going to the porch these days, followed and called her back.

"One thing you said I don't understand," she began, and Mrs. Faulkner's pretty face showed plainly there had been something of a storm.

"I said this, Laura," her friend responded, permitting her to go no further, but turning at the step and looking up into her indignant eyes. "You do yourself injury by showing such concern about Captain Barclay. Everybody says so, and it's all wasted as far as he's concerned. He never notices your messages in any way."

It was galling to feel herself censured or criticized, but Mrs. Winn was becoming used to that. It was worse than galling to be told that her willom lover now turned from her almost with contempt. She could bear it that they should say that Galahad Barclay was again circling within danger of her fascinations and would speedily find himself powerless to resist. She could not bear it that they should declare him dead to her. The anger ablaze in her eyes and flushing her cheeks was something even Mrs. Faulkner had never seen before. It was as though she had roused some almost tigerish trait. For a moment Laura stood glaring at her visitor, one hand nervously clutching at the balcony rail, the other at the snugly buttoned bodice of her dark gown.

appearance of feminine drapery at the threshold. Mrs. Brooks came basking into view, chatting volubly with some one still invisible. Mrs. Frazier came sidling after, and then as they reached the open air the deep tones of their invalid host were heard mingling with the lighter, shriller, if not exactly silvery, accents of his visitors. One glance they threw toward the young matron at the opposite end of the piazza, and then it seemed as though Mrs. Frazier promptly precipitated herself into the doorway again, as though to block it against Barclay's possible egress. "Determined not to let him see me, nor me him," were the unspoken words that flashed through Laura's thoughts. Some devil of mischief seemed to whisper in her ear, for when Mrs. Faulkner turned again there stood her hostess holding forth for her inspection a little note addressed to Mrs. H. H. Winn in a hand Mrs. Faulkner recognized at once as Barclay's. With an icy sneer the lady spoke.

"You think he doesn't write. This came only an hour ago."
Not five minutes later Mrs. Frazier turned to Mrs. Faulkner and asked, "What was Laura Winn showing you—a letter?"

Mrs. Blythe was passing at the moment, Ada Lawrence, a tall, pallid slip of a girl, in her first black dress, walk-



"What was Laura Winn showing you—a letter?"

ing sadly at her side. Mrs. Faulkner nodded assent to the question, but glanced significantly at the passersby, on their way seemingly to the house the elders had just left. Mrs. Blythe bowed courteously and smiled, but the smile was one of those half-hearted attempts that seemed to wither instantly at Mrs. Frazier's solemn and distant salutation.

"Now what's that woman taking Ada Lawrence there for?" was Mrs. Frazier's query the instant the two were out of earshot, and for the moment she forgot the letter and the significant glance in Mrs. Faulkner's eyes. But Mrs. Brooks had not, and no sooner had the door of Barclay's quarters opened and swallowed up the new callers than the major's wife turned back to it. "You don't mean a letter from—him?" she asked, with a nod of the head at Barclay's quarters.

"I didn't mean to say anything about it," said Mrs. Faulkner with proper hesitation, "but you seem to know as much as I do, and she made no secret of it whatever. Indeed I don't know that there's anything in it that anybody mightn't see."

"I think she has no business whatever receiving letters now that her husband's away—nor any other time, for that matter," said Mrs. Frazier hotly, "and I mean to tell her so, and I'm astonished at him."

"For heaven's sake don't tell her I let it out," exclaimed Mrs. Faulkner. "You've just got to say you saw it away from his door."

"Well, I think the sooner Mr. Harry Winn gets back the better it will be for this garrison, and I'll say so to Colonel Frazier this very night," exclaimed the colonel's wife, bristling with proper indignation. "And he'll come back if we have to send couriers to order him."

But no courier was needed to summon Lieutenant Winn. Two days later, fast as jaded horse could carry him, followed by a single orderly, he was coming, full of hope and pluck and enthusiasm, the bearer of tidings that meant so much to him, that might be of such weight in the removal of some portion at least of the serious stoppages against his pay. Away out in the Apache mountains, where the remnants of the Friday gang seemed to have scattered into little squads of two or three, one party had been trailed and chased to its hole, a wild nook in the rocks, and there in a brief, bloody fight two more of the gang bit the dust in reaching that height of outlaw ambition, "dying with their boots on." Others were wounded and captured, and still another, neither wounded nor combatant, but a trembling skulker, was dragged out from a cleft in among the bowlders and kicked into the presence of the commanding officer by a burly Irishman who would have lost the bliss of a dozen pay days sprints rather than that one achievement, for the skulking captive was Marsden, and Marsden was English.

A more abject, pitiable, helpless wretch even Texan troopers had never seen. Imporing his captors to protect him against the illimitable possibilities of lynch law—for there were veteran soldiers present to whose thinking drumhead court martial and summary execution were all too good for Marsden—the ex-sergeant told the story of his stealings and the names of his accomplices, but declared that all his ill gotten gains were gone. Every cent he had at the time of his flight was taken from him, he protested, by the gang of desperadoes among whom he had found refuge.

"He's lying, sorr," declared Sergeant Shaugnessy at this juncture. "He's hidin' the hoith of it somewheres, an