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A stirring story of Army Life in the Philippines

CHAPTER I

Something unusual was going on at division headquarters and the men in the nearest regiment were camped regular and volunteer, were lined up along the sentry posts and silently, eagerly watching and waiting. For a week rumor had been rife that orders for a move were coming, and the brigades had been shivering at night in dripping, dreaching driftings in the Pacific, or drilling for hours each day on the bleak slopes of the Presidio heights, they had been praying for orders to break into the monotony of the routine. They were envious of the comrades who had been shipped to Manila, envious of those who had stormed Santiago, and would have welcomed with unreasoning enthusiasm any mandate that bore the promise of change of scene—or duty. The afternoon was raw and chilly; the wet wind blew salt and strong from the westward sea, and the mist rolled in, thick and fleecy, hiding from view the familiar landmarks of the neighborhood and forcing a display of lamp-lights in the row of gaudy saloons across the street that bounded the camp ground toward the setting sun, though that invisible luminary was still an hour high and afternoon drill only just over.

Company after company in their campaign hats and flannel shirts, in worn blue trousers and brown canvas leggings, the men had come swarming in from the broad driveways of the beautiful barracks, and as they passed the tents of the commanding general, even though they kept their heads erect and noses to the front, their wary eyes glanced quickly at the unusual array of saddled horses, of carriages and Concord wagons that lined the curbstone, and noted the number of officers grouped about the gate. Ponchos and overcoat capes were much in evidence on every side as the men broke ranks, scattered to their tents and stowed away their dripping arms and belts, and then came streaming out to stare, unrebuked, at headquarters. It was still early in the war days, and among the volunteers and, indeed, among regiments of the regular army, ranks were sprinkled with college men who had rubbed shoulders but a few months earlier with certain subalterns, the military line of demarcation was a dead level when "the boys" were out of sight and hearing of their tents, and so it happened that when a young officer came hurrying down the pathway that led from the tents of the general to those of the field officers of the Tenth California, he was hailed by more than one group of regulars who, while his head passed, and, as a rule, the query took the terse, soldierly form of "What's up, Billy?"

The lieutenant nodded affably to several of his fellows of the football field, but his hand crept out from under the shrouding cape, palm down, signaling caution. "Orders—some kind," he answered in tones just loud enough to be heard by those nearest him. "Seen the old man anywhere? The general wants him," and never waiting for reply, the youngster hurried on. He was a bright, cheery, brave-eyed lad of 20 who six months earlier was stumbling through the sciences at the great university on the heights beyond the glorious bay, never dreaming of a deadlier battle than that in which his pet eleven grappled with the striped team of a rival college. All on a sudden, to the amazement of the elders of the great republic, the tenets and traditions of the past were thrown to the winds and the "Hermes Nation" leaped up by the hundred thousand and a reluctant congress accorded a meager addition to the regular army. The college athlete joined the ranks, while a limited few, gifted with relatives who had both push and "pull," were permitted to pass a not very exacting examination and join the permanent establishment as second lieutenants forthwith. Counting those commissioned in the regular artillery and infantry, there must have been a dozen in the thronging camps back of the great city, and of these Billy Gray, "Billie," or "Billey," as a tutor dubbed him when the war and Billy broke out together, the latter to the extent of a four-days' absence from all collegiate duties—was easily the gem of the lot. One of the "bright" minds in that class, he was one of the laziest; one of the quickest and most agile when aroused, he was one of the torpid as a rule. One of the kind who should have "gone in for honors," as the faculty said, he came near to doing so, but declined. The only son of a retired colonel of the army who had made California his home, Billy had spent years in camp and field and saddle and knew the west as he could never hope to know Huswell. The only natural soldier in his class when, sorely against the will of most, they entered the student battalion, he promptly won the highest chevrons that could be given in the sophomore year, and, almost as promptly, lost them for "dites" and absences. When the "varsity" was challenged by a neighboring institute to a competitive drill the "scouts" of the former reported that the crack company of the San Pedro had the snappiest captain they ever saw, and that, with a few terrier material to choose from, and more of it, the "varsity" wouldn't stand a ghost of a show in the eyes of the professional judges unless Billy would "brace up" and "take hold." Billy was willing as Barkis, but the faculty said it would put a premium on laxity to make Billy a "varsity" captain, even though the present incumbents were ready, any of them, to resign in his favor. "Prez" said no in no uncertain terms; the challenge was declined, whereas the rival institute crowded lustily and the thing got into the papers. As a result a select company of student volunteers was formed; its members agreed to drill an hour daily in addition to the prescribed work, provided Billy would "take hold" in earnest, and this was the company that, under his command, swept the boards six weeks later and left San Pedro's contingent an amazed and disgusted crowd. Then Billy went to metaphorical pieces again until the war clouds overspread the land; then like his father's son he girded up his loins, went in for a commission and won. And here was a "sub" in Uncle Sam's stalwart infantry with three classmates

with placid superiority, "considering it a reflection on her sex when I fall to pay it due homage. Of course, you didn't see the ladies. The party was shown into the general's own domicile. Couldn't you see how many young fellows were posing in picturesque attitudes in front of it? Awe, Hank! He suddenly shouted to an officer striding past the tent in dripping mackintosh. 'Goin' up to division headquarters? Just tell the staff or the chief I've sent an orderly galloping after Squeers. He's half way to the presidio now, but I'll be on in a jiffy for the can get back.' The silent officer nodded and went on, whereas Gordon made a spring for the entrance and hailed again. "Say, Hank! Who are the dumsels?" The answer came back through the fog: "People from the east—looking for a runaway. Old gent, pretty daughter, and pretty daughter's pretty cousin. Heard the orders?" "Damn the orders! They don't touch us. Where do they come from?" "D'reet from Washington, they say. Three regiments to sail at once, and—"

"Oh, I know all that!" shouted Gordon, impatiently. "It was all over camp an hour ago! What's the story—the girls—come from? What's their name?" "Wasn't presented," was the sulky reply. "Let a lot of stuffy old women show up in search of long-lost sons and those fellows from the officers' tent think them on us less than no time, but a brace of pretty girls—! Why, they double the gate guards so that no outsider can so much as see them. Billy, here, knows 'em. Ask him."

By this time the youngster had ranged up alongside the adjutant and was laughingly enjoying the latest arrival's tirade at the expense of the headquarters staff, but at his closing words, "The girls—grin of amusement suddenly left his face, giving way to a look of blank amazement. "I know 'em! I haven't been east of the Big Muddy since I was a kid." "They asked for you, just the same, just after you started. Least one of 'em did—for what's his name?" The chief military legal adviser, came out bareheaded and called after you, but you were out of hearing. He said the cousin, the prettiest one, recognized you as you skipped away from the general's tent and pointed you out to her friend. Somebody explained you were running an errand for one of those aids too lazy to go himself, and that you'd be back presently."

"This go at once, young man," said the adjutant, laying a mighty hand on the junior's square shoulder. "Stand not upon the order of your going, but git! Never you mind about the colonel. TO BE CONTINUED."

CONFESSIONS OF A SOLDIER. "Transport arrived. The way is clear." "That night I marched my men to the coast, where I found transportation waiting me. A few days later we landed them safely at Annapolis. The letter produced by Maj. Berante was intended for inspection of the secretary."

A puff of warm air blew from the interior and confirmed the statement, was a dozen miles away in summer, and not a dozen miles away to the east men were strolling about with palm-leaf fans and wilted collars. Here, close to the gray shores of the mighty sea, blankets and overcoats were being hanging for the older officer tugged at the lacinings of the military front door, swore between his set teeth when the knots, swollen by the wet, withstood his efforts, and then roared: "Sergeant major, send somebody here to open this."

A light footstep sounded on the springy board floor, nimble fingers worked a moment at the dim, then the flap was thrown open and the adjutant's office stood partially revealed. It was a big wall tent backed up against another of the same size and pattern. Half a dozen plain chairs, two rough wooden tables littered with books, papers and smoking tobacco, an oil stove and a cheap clothes rack on which were hanging raincoats, ponchos and a cape or two, comprised all the furniture. The sergeant major, a veteran of years and steeped in the national and state colors of the famous regiment, and back of them well within the second tent, where one clerk was just lighting a camp lantern, were perched on rough tables a brace of field desks with the regimental books. The sergeant major, a veteran of years and steeped in the national and state colors of the famous regiment, and back of them well within the second tent, where one clerk was just lighting a camp lantern, were perched on rough tables a brace of field desks with the regimental books.

"Who all are over yonder at the chief's?" asked the adjutant, as soon as he had his visitors well inside, and the soft accent as well as the quaint phraseology told that in the colonel's confidential staff officer a southerner spoke. "All the brigade and most regimental commanders 'cept ours, I should say, and they seem to be waiting for them. Can't we send?" was the answer, as the junior whipped off his campaign hat and sprinkled the floor with the vigorous shakes he gave the battered felt. "Have sent," said his entertainer, briefly, as he filled a pipe from the open tobacco box and struck a safety match. "Orderly galloped after him ten minutes ago. Blow the brigade and battalion officers' names, a veteran of years who was who the women up there?" "No, you didn't! You said 'who all are up yonder?' I'm a sub, and s'posed you meant men—soldiers—officers. I have to do with anybody in petticoats."

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"And I'm a grizzled vet of a dozen years' duty, crows' feet and gray hairs a-comin'," grinned the adjutant, pulling his eyes up to his full height, as if to say, "and when you're as old as I am and half as wise, Billy, you'll know that a pretty girl is worth ten times the thought our old drums of generals demand. My name ain't Gordon if I haven't a mind to wait over there through the mist and the wind just to look 'em I've sent for Squeers. Then I'll get a look at the girls."

A box on the ear, when she afterwards admitted was not for the caress, but because of its publicity. Our expressions of joy were interrupted by the general-in-chief taking Health aside and speaking with him in a tone which, though too low to be heard by the others, brought a light into his eye that I had not seen there for months. Then the commander of the army of the west offered Margaret special thanks for the great service she had rendered and hurried away. What he was going to do I did not know then, but the next day the thunder of his guns told me that he was taking advantage of the absence of Longstreet's corps from the army of the Tennessee, fighting and winning the battle of Missionary Ridge—a battle which marked the beginning of the end of the confederacy.

As a love story this narrative must necessarily be a fragment. What had passed between Gen. (then Capt.) Heath and Margaret Beach before he met her through Chattanooga and Morgan's Cross Roads I never learned, for both were naturally reticent, and especially so with regard to the most sacred of all conditions. After the battle that followed in the wake of the information we had gained and the general's vindication, I was suddenly summoned one morning to attend him. As to the courtship, except that courtship which was going on under my eyes while the general held Margaret as a prisoner, I know nothing, but I can vouch for the fact of their wedding, for I witnessed it, and they were afterward a loving couple, for I have often visited them.

As to my affair with Georgia, an account of what followed our few brief meetings described in the last pages of this story would involve another volume of confessions not more creditable to me than the foregoing. I made a very unsatisfactory lover, forgetting, during an exciting campaign, to communicate with my innamorata for months at a time. But when the absorbing events of that most eventful period in the nation's history were ended, I took as much interest in love as I had taken in war. But I made slow progress as a husband. For years I could never hear the rattle of a drum, nor the blare of some careless man singing over my head, without showing a restlessness that troubled my wife and unsettled me to no purpose. But as the years went by I gradually quieted down to the state of peace, and the time came when I conceived as much horror of war as I had at one time felt admiration.

The general was offered promotion for his instrumental part in bringing the corps of Longstreet's move, but he resolutely declined it. On the Atlanta campaign he did such effective service as a cavalry flanker that he was again offered, and accepted, the double star. A generation later, when the blue and the gray stood shoulder to shoulder against the Spaniard, he became commander in the blended column. THE END.

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Railroad Time Table. ILLINOIS CENTRAL. Illinois Central Time Table No. 22, taking effect at 12:00 o'clock noon, Sunday, Oct. 8, 1899.

CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN RY. "The Maple Leaf Route." Time card, Thorpe, Iowa. Chicago Special, Daily, Going East, 7:40 a.m. Day Ex. (see daily except Sunday), 8:10 a.m. Way Freight, 8:30 a.m. Chicago Passenger, 8:40 a.m. Chicago Special, Daily, Going West, 7:40 p.m. Day Ex. (see daily except Sunday), 8:10 p.m. Way Freight, 8:30 p.m. Chicago Passenger, 8:40 p.m. For information and rates apply to J. L. O'HARROW, Agent, Thorpe.

C. M. St. P. Ry. DELAWARE TIME CARD. North Bound. St. Paul & West, Passenger, 9:00 a.m. Day Freight, 11:15 a.m. South Bound. Day Freight & Kansas City, Pass., 6:07 p.m. Way Freight, 10:20 p.m.

B. C. R. & N. Ry. CEDAR RAPIDS TIME CARD. MAIN LINE GOING NORTH. 7:35 a.m. No. 1 Minneapolis Express, 8:05 a.m. No. 2 Chicago Passenger, 8:30 p.m. No. 3 Minneapolis Express, 8:30 p.m. No. 4 Chicago Passenger, 11:45 p.m. No. 5 Chicago Passenger, 11:45 p.m. MAIN LINE GOING EAST AND SOUTH. 8:30 p.m. No. 2 Chicago Passenger, 8:40 p.m. No. 3 Minneapolis Express, 8:40 p.m. No. 4 Chicago & St. Louis Express, 12:30 p.m. No. 5 Chicago Passenger, 6:10 p.m. No. 6 Burlington Passenger, 7:15 a.m. No. 7 Pullman sleeper, free chair car and coaches to Chicago. No. 8 Pullman sleeper and coaches to Chicago and St. Louis. No. 9 Pullman sleeper, Chicago, arrives Chicago 7:50 a.m. Ngt.—night.

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Good Advice. When you want anything in the line of Furniture do not forget to write us or examine our stock and prices. We have no room for shoddy goods, but with forty years of experience can guarantee you honest goods at fair prices. Remember this and you will profit by it. F. Werkmeister, 3-91 Earville, Iowa.

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