

Private Brown.

By Captain Jack Crawford

CHAPTER IX—CONTINUED.

"My dear girl, I feared as much, and that is why I have pointed you to the impassable barrier which lies between you—at present. You must master this growing fondness before it masters you, for love, my child, when once it gains supremacy rules its victims as with a rod of iron, and laughs to scorn the rules of propriety. Think of the distressing scandal which would agitate the military circles of the whole land were it to become known that the beloved daughter of one of the most distinguished officers of the army had bestowed her love upon a humble private soldier in the ranks. The finger of scorn would be pointed at you, dear, and your old father, were he to survive the shock, would resign his proud position and seek to bury himself from the world in obscurity and retirement. You are treading dangerously near the brink of an awful precipice, Alice, and I would lead you away to safer ground."

"Oh, you frighten me!" the girl said, with an appealing look. "I cannot smother the emotions which God placed in my soul, cannot change the nature He has given me, and I believe it would be wicked to torture my own peace of mind even to preserve unbroken the lines of army social distinction. Mrs. Colby, I confess to you that my eyes have not been blinded to the growing regard I feel for Mr. Thornton. I have even felt that he might be necessary to my future happiness. Never by word or look has he shown me any attention that would indicate that he pertained toward me aught but a feeling of simple friendship, and what you have told me of his—his thinking a great deal of me as a revelation, and, I confess it, a most pleasing one. But, Mrs. Colby, I assure you, on my honor, that I have never once thought of the military world knowing aught of my tender feeling which might exist between myself and a private soldier. I did not even intend that you should know it, dear, as I love you, until Private Brown should disappear from life, and Mr. Thornton, with his military service but a memory of the past, should step into our social circles. If this should be brought about, what then?"

"Ah! that might make a wide difference, dear. Now I begin to understand you, and you have laid a great load of apprehension on my heart. There would be no impropriety in a refined, honorable and worthy gentleman in civil life aspiring to the hand of the daughter of a military officer. Many do so, and the most happy results usually follow. Allice, I know what a woman's love is. I have felt its all-consuming fire in my own soul. I feel it yet, for I have loved a woman who is just as fond of lovers, and oftentimes just as foolish ones, as we were when our love was sealed with marriage. Now, dear, I will be your friend and adviser in this matter, if you will permit. There (kissing her) is the seal of my friendship, and I want you to confide in me. There is but one pathway leading to your future happiness, and it must not be strayed from. While Edward Thornton remains as Private Brown you must look upon him as but a soldier in the ranks. You must avoid him all you can, and, if it is possible, his discharge from the service must be brought about. I think it can be. When that consummation is reached he may feel at liberty to sue for your hand, and should he do so, you must refer him to your father. His past life must be investigated, for you must remember, dear, that we have but his own unsupported story regarding himself. There, I know what you would say. I believe in him as much as you do, but your father would demand the most convincing proof of his worth before he would permit him to show you any attention. Now, you must be patient. If you love each other, as I believe you do, and should Mr. Thornton establish the fact that he is a man of honor and true worth as I believe he will, you need have no fear, my dear girl, of the future, for love will surmount any ordinary obstacle that may rise in its path."

Allice threw her arms about her friend's neck, and kissed her fondly. Then her emotions overcame her, and burying her face in Mrs. Colby's bosom she sobbed like a child. Capt. Colby's step upon the porch aroused her, and going out at the back door to avoid meeting him in her agitated state of mind, she sought her home and the privacy of her own chamber.

CHAPTER X.

Days passed, and save at a distance Brown saw nothing of Allice. Day after day, when not on duty, he repaired with his sketch book to his usual haunts, but she had either discontinued her daily rides or had chosen a new field for that healthful recreation. He could not understand it, and the clinging fear came upon him that her father had learned of their meetings and, with a strict eye to military propriety, had forbidden the continuance of their friendship. The thought troubled him greatly, and he grew morose and reserved in his intercourse with his comrades. It was believed by his associates that the sting of the disgrace of a court-martial had left a painful wound, and they did all they could to show him that in their eyes his honor was unscathed by the act of assault and its penalty.

It is a custom at military posts of the west that after each day's service on guard duty the cavalry soldier, should he so desire, is given a "hunting pass," and is permitted to take his horse and go in quest of game. In his perturbed state of mind sketching had lost its interest to Brown, and after each guard service he would secure official permission, mount his horse and speed away toward the base of the Magdalena or San Mateo mountains to hunt antelope.

One afternoon while returning from a hunt he rode slowly down a draw or depression in the plain, his thoughts busy with Allice Sanford. It had become quite apparent to him that her failure to meet him as of old was of her own contrivance, else why, in such lovely weather, rather than dismount and ride daily gallops down the river? He asked himself: "For ever having had the assurance to think that he, a private sol-

dier, might aspire to the love of the daughter of the commanding officer of one of the most important military posts in the west. He began to think that it would have been better for his peace of mind had he never met her.

Riding from the draw onto the level of the plain two moving objects caught his eye a mile distant, traveling in the direction of the mountains. Hastily taking his field-glass from a saddle pocket he leveled it upon the objects, and his heart seemed to grow cold and a great lump came into his throat when he saw Allice and Lieut. Vandever riding slowly along side by side, apparently engaged in deep conversation. Here, he thought, was an explanation of why the girl had avoided him. She had become on friendly terms with the lieutenant. Of course he had painted his assails in the darkest colors, and Allice now looked upon her former soldier friend as an unworthy of her notice. Perhaps she had even been led to hate him. The thought was maddening, and his breast was rent with painful emotions at the reflection that he might never again hear the loved tones of her voice or gaze into her soulful eyes.

With a sigh that seemed almost a groan of agony he closed the glass and returned it to its case, and was about to spur his horse forward when on raising his eyes he saw, but a few rods distant, Col. Sanford riding toward him. Straightening himself in the saddle he awaited the officer's approach, and as he came up respectfully gave the military salute. The colonel returned the salutation with official dignity and said: "My man, ride and overtake Lieut. Vandever and Miss Sanford. Give them my compliments and say to them that I am out for a ride, and if they desire a good-looking old fellow for company I would be pleased to have them wait for me. I am too old to go thundering after them as I would once have loved to do. I was a great rider in my day, but old age and rheumatism have called a halt on that sort of work."

What could he do but obey? With a parting salute he turned his horse's head toward the young couple and dashed away, confused at the embarrassing task assigned him. Rother would he have faced a thousand yelling savages who sought his life than the gentle girl and her somewhat effeminate escort, believing as he did that through the officer's representations she had come to hate him. As every leap of his powerful horse lessened the distance between himself and the young couple, his heart throbbled faster and faster, and he would have made any earthly sacrifice to be relieved of the duty upon which he had been sent. He at last determined that he would ride up and de-



"MY MAN, RIDE AND OVERTAKE LIEUT. VANDEVER."

liver his message as though to perfect strangers and hasten away again, and touching his horse with the spurs he urged him to greater speed, that the unpleasant task might be the sooner performed.

When within a quarter of a mile of the couple Brown was astonished to see Vandever suddenly wheel his horse across the plain in the direction of the western borders of the garrison, while Miss Sanford turned her pony's head and rode back toward himself.

It may be appropriate to here give the conversation between Allice and Vandever, that his abrupt and hasty flight from her side may be explained. It may also show the stability of the foundation upon which Brown's torturing fears were built.

At the dinner table that day Allice, after much coaxing, had drawn from her father a promise to go riding with her, but at the hour of starting a man from San Marcial had called on some government contractor business, and the girl was compelled to start alone. The business was adjusted much more quickly than the commanding officer had anticipated, and recalling how eager his daughter had been to enjoy a ride with him, he determined she should not be deprived of the pleasure, and, ordering his horse, he started after her. As he rode through one of the saltpetre pits in the line of earthworks which surrounded the garrison he saw Lieut. Vandever join her on the plain, and ride away by her side. They started after a little while in a gallop, and seeing the futility of attempting to ride slowly ahead and meet them on their return.

The lieutenant had spent much of the day in a social game of cards with a hay contractor in the club room of the post trader's store, the stakes being not the price of a bottle of wine or the cigars at the conclusion of each game, and a group of chalk marks on the face of the table indicated that quite a number of bottles of the sparkling beverage had changed ownership as the hours sped by. When at last, weary of the pastime, the players ceased their games, the officer became aware of the fact that his brain was in a rather uncertain state of lucidity, and to wear away the effects of his frequent potations he went to the stables, ordered his horse and started for a ride. He was not at all what civilians would term "beastly drunk," but had taken sufficient wine to make him reckless and to screw his vanity up to the highest notch, and as he galloped out of the garrison he felt as loudly as ever did Alexander the Great after a well won victory. Seeing Miss Sanford riding along but a short distance away he forgot that they had ever had a difference, and hastily galloped up to her side. Raising his cap he said to her: "Will you grant me the privilege of a short gallop with you, Miss Sanford? I cannot tell you how lonely I get at such times, and how I long to see you smiling down from society and through into duty in this remote corner of creation."

"You will find me a dull companion, I fear," Mr. Vandever. I came out myself to endeavor to wear away a half maddening feeling. You can ride with me if you wish."

"Thank you. I am sure neither of us can feel blue in such charming society. How's that for a double-acting compliment? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Very clever, but you rate your own powers of attraction higher than I do mine for I assure you that I will be anything but a charming companion in my present state of feeling."

"Miss Sanford is always charming," he replied, with a smile that seemed to lose its vitality and fade away into a sickly grin. "Perhaps a gallop may serve to rouse our spirits. Come."

Their horses dashed away and for half a mile they rode rapidly. Then reining her pony down to a walk Allice said: "I must not distress my horse with too hard riding. Let us walk our animals awhile."

"A very beautiful trait in your character, Miss Sanford. It is an evidence of gentle disposition and a sympathetic soul, and it causes me to admire you more and more, if that were possible. The young girl with that tinge of severity in her tones, replied: "Mr. Vandever, an honest compliment from a gentleman to a lady is always appreciated, but I detest frothy praise that is bestowed through what some gentlemen may believe a sense of gallantry."

"O, but I assure you my words come from the bottom of my heart; but if I have annoyed you I sincerely beg your pardon, and will not offend again."

"I hope you will not, Mr. Vandever. If you wish to talk tell me something of your academy life."

He began a running description of some of the sports and pastimes at West Point, and really interested the girl with his boyish enthusiasm as he detailed his superiority in many of the games.

It was at this time that Brown emerged from the draw and leveled his glass upon the couple, his heart aching with pain and apprehension at their apparent sociability.

Vandever could not long keep away from his favorite topic, however, and as his delight when he could get any of the younger officers to listen to him, he began to recount his flirtations with the girls during his academy days. A spirit of mischief possessed the young girl and by an intercepted word now and then she seemed to take down with typhoid fever. I had the best of physicians to attend me and on the 13th day of January, 1894, I was allowed to get up. I was emaciated, weak and had no appetite. I could only drag along for a short time, and when I was compelled to sit down and rest. This continued for some time and I began to give up hope of ever getting well. I lost my position in Benning county and having secured one in Pitt county, clerking in a store, I undertook it, but was so weak I could not do the work, and had to give it up. The disease settled in my knees, legs and feet. I was taking first one kind of medicine and then another, but none seemed to do me any good. I was low spirited. I moved out to Col. Sugg's about four or five months ago and commenced taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I took three a day for about three months. I began to regain my appetite in a week's time, and then my weakness began to disappear, and hope sprang up with a blessedness that is beyond all telling. At the expiration of the three months I was entirely cured and could take my axe and go in the woods and do as good a day's work as any man. I was troubled with dyspepsia and that has disappeared. It is a splendid tonic for weak people. I say, Mr. Editor, God bless Dr. Williams. May he live for a long time. I need his pills to keep me in good health, for he has done a wonderful lot of good. Tell everybody that needs it about Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People that if they will come to me I can certainly satisfy them. I have a box of pills with me and whenever I feel bad I take one.

SUBJECTS OF QUEEN VIC.

MR. W. T. STEAD, it is reported in London newspaper circles, has acquired a proprietary interest in the Echo, and will become its editor.

Gladstone's trip to the Riviera appears to have restored him to vigorous health. Some of his friends say that he has not looked better in several years.

FROM OVER THE OCEAN.

THE RUSSIAN crown was made by an old-time Genoese court jeweler named Paulie. It was first worn by Catherine the Great. It is worth \$6,000,000.

A LIVING SHADOW.

REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION OF A North Carolina Man.

Strange, But True, Story from the Lumber Regions of a Southern State. Verdict of Personal Investigation.

CHAPTER XI.

With an impatient gesture of the hand she motioned him from her, and confused and crestfallen he galloped away.

TURNING her pony to ride back toward the fort, she noted the rapid approach of a cavalryman, and when he drew near enough to be recognizable a smile of pleasure presented the frown which was thronged on her face.

"Why, what a surprise," she cried, as he rode up and raised his cap. "This is the first time I have met you since—since—the last time."

"Since my release from confinement, you would say, Miss Sanford. Do not feel the least delicacy in referring to that experience, for I assure you that aside from a regret that I violated a military rule, my conscience is entirely clear when I review my late trouble with you."

"My friend," Mr. Thornton, Lieut. Vandever is not a friend of mine. Why, I have just forbidden him to ever speak to me again. His unmanly action toward yourself and certain traits of his character with which I had previously become acquainted entirely destroyed any feeling of esteem I might have entertained toward him, and his action of few moments ago have caused me to hate and distrust him. I tolerated his society for a time to-day through a sense of the respect due his rank, and he took advantage of that toleration to make himself very offensive to me."

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