

# Captain Brabazon

BY B. M. CROKER

A Military Romance of South Africa

## CHAPTER XVII.

The Marchers had joined the column to which Teddy's regiment was attached. They had recently encamped on a desolate, wide-spreading plain, awaiting the general advance. The force was divided into three huge lagers, inside of which were picked the cavalry horses, the stores and the oxen; outside were the tents and guns, irregular troops, native contingent and cooking fires. Captains Brabazon and Gee had their little bell tents pitched as usual side by side; the former is to be found in his at the present moment, sitting on his bed reading a letter by the light of a lantern attached to the pole above his head. He has torn open the envelope with hasty, nervous fingers and turned it completely inside out in the hopes of discovering a line from Esme; but no, there was nothing; so with a sharp spasm of misgiving he falls back on the epistle in his hand.

"Dear Captain Brabazon," it says. "Your letter has just arrived, with a full account of your unhappy mistake and fatal precipitation. I am truly and sincerely sorry for you. It is the most unfortunate thing I have ever heard of in all my experience. Esme's disobedience and your rash, hot temper must, I am afraid, share the entire blame. Of course it was a most painful time for all of us last September; but luckily the wedding was to have been such a quiet affair that the real facts have never transpired beyond our own circle; and people imagine that you received a sudden order to join your regiment. Esme was naturally greatly troubled. Her pride received a mortal wound; but I am glad to tell you that a very gay visit to Brighton completely restored her spirits, and I cannot be too thankful now that the dear girl's heart was never very much centered in the match. Of course, when the marriage was so very advantageous in every way, I did not analyze her feelings too closely, and I knew that you would make her an excellent husband. But now that you have hardly any means besides your pay, things are quite different, as I need scarcely point out. Both battalions of your regiment are abroad in countries where it would be impossible for Esme to live; and you see, my dear Miles, much as I like you, I cannot consult my own feelings in the matter. I stand in a very responsible position to Esme. I fill the place of both her parents, and it would not be right to allow her to marry a captain in a marching regiment, with nothing but his pay. It costs me a great deal to write this, but it is my duty, and from my duty I may not shrink. I appeal to your honor, to your love for Esme, and your desire for her happiness before your own, to renounce her completely. There is nothing more wearing or more miserable for a girl than a long and hopeless engagement. I am sure you will agree with me. Esme desires me to say that she received your letter, and sends her kind regards; and I am, your sincere well-wisher."

### "SARAH BRABAZON."

This, then, was the death-knell of his hopes. "Her kind regards!" How unnatural, how almost ludicrous, such a message sounded! Firmly crumpling up the letter into a ball, he flung it down passionately, and, burying his face in his hands, sat without moving for many minutes.

Some time later Captain Gee looked in, to borrow a bootlace, and found the tent still empty; the lamp flaring away in solitary extravagance, an envelope on the bed. He glanced at it distrustfully. "A woman's hand, and an old woman's—slight mourning. I'll bet it's from that old serpent, Mrs. B., giving him a piece of her mind, breaking off the whole business," said Dicky to himself, crumpling fiercely. At this moment the crumpled letter also caught his roving eye. There was a suggestion of wild, ungovernable fury in its present crushed condition that spoke whole volumes to the far-seeing little gentleman, who surveyed it meditatively, as he anxiously pulled his tenderly fostered sandy mustache.

"So that's it," he remarked, after a pause, "as plain as a pike-staff. I'll say nothing, I'll say nothing, though I know as much about it now as if he had told me the whole story. If he likes to make a clean breast of it, well and good. I think myself, he is well out of it. A girl without a penny! However, I'll say nothing—silence is golden." With this valuable precept in his mind, and bestowing one last significant glance at Mrs. Brabazon's ill-used offering, he put his hands in his pockets and slowly took his departure, as if to Miles, he found plenty of work as a fine specific. His mind was filled with other things besides blighted hopes and black despair. Foraging parties, fuel, firearms, forage, ration boards, etc., occupied his thoughts, and he had very little leisure to dwell upon his lot. Love, as Gussie had quoted, "is a mere parenthesis in a man's life," he is not so fond of allowing himself to dwell on harrowing recollections as a woman, nor do his thoughts, like hers, find a melancholy pleasure in visiting the grave of dead hopes. Days and weeks went by, not so slowly as might be supposed; weeks spent in foraging, wood cutting, scouting and other serious tales—tales that would have compelled the great Munchausen himself to veil his face, for a Boer's imagination can bestir itself at times. Most of Teddy's spare hours were passed with his cousin, and he had become a very popular visitor in the Marcher camp. He was even welcomed by "the ugly little fellow with freckles," as he mentally called Captain Gee, who had now completely got over what Miles termed "his ridiculous stiffness about the legacy," and was prepared to extend the hand of good-fellowship to this other young Brabazon.

For instance, they were both fond of horses, of shooting, of arguing the point, and of lots of red pepper with their daily stew. To improve the flavor of this said stew, with some ingredient foreign to the

wide one. I won two prizes at our tournament. She was there, she saw me, she smiled—at least I imagined she did—when I carried off the first prize."

"Of course you never wrote to her?"

"Never," emphatically.

"Never spoke, never wrote. Well, under these difficult and delicate circumstances, what was your next move?"

"I sent her flowers."

"Oh! Having previously mastered their language?"

"No, not quite such a fool as all that. I got them from Covent Garden—money no object, as Gussie says—and I used to climb the wall and lay them on an old sun dial in the pleasure ground."

"My poor Teddy! It was a desperate bad case!" in a tone of sincere commiseration.

"It was, it is. Before we were ordered off I left a bouquet of forget-me-nots as big as an umbrella; and then we marched away, and of course there was an end of everything, for the present."

"And pray, what is to be the sequel?"

"I hope the sequel will be, when this business is over, we, of course, will be sent home. I shall get leave, I shall go to York, like a shot out of a 74-pounder, and get introduced to my present character, and I shall ask her to marry me some day. Some day," beginning to whistle in the air.

"A girl you have only spoken to once in your life. Edward Brabazon, I had no idea that you were such a susceptible young idiot; no milder word will do," said his companion emphatically.

"Why am I an idiot?" angrily. "At least I've seen and, to a certain extent, known her for nearly two years. Why, you went all across the world to marry a girl you had never set eyes on!"

"I did. And all I can say is that I hope your venture, if you persist in it, will turn out better than mine."

"Hullo! What's this in front?" suddenly setting spurs. "Boer allies? You've got your revolver all right. We must cut our way through them, not a second to lose. Come on."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Captain Brabazon was quite correct; about fifty natives in full war dress, probably on their way to join an impi, seemed to have sprung from the earth, and cut off the irregulars and the two Brabazons from the rest of their party, who were now just disappearing over the crest of a hill.

Yelling like demons their war cry, "Usuti! Usuti!" they closed round the little band, armed with a formidable array of guns and assegais. There was nothing for it but to charge them, which they did at full gallop, discharging their revolvers with telling effect. The dust, the smoke, the firing and the shouting lasted about three minutes; and the high grass and rocks; four of their number lay on the ground, a trooper also, on his face; Miles Brabazon had an ugly cut in his forehead, and that was all.

"Come on, Teddy," he shouted, imperatively. "We deserved this; that poor fellow is dead," looking at the trooper; "we can't do him any good, and there is no use in loitering." So saying, he put spurs to his horse and galloped after the others, who were now endeavoring to overtake their party. They had now gone above a quarter of a mile, when, turning to Teddy to make some remark, he was struck, even in the deepening twilight, by the drawn and agonized expression of his face.

"What is it?" he exclaimed, reining up in alarm.

"I'm hit," faltered his cousin, now reeling in his saddle, and falling forward on his horse's neck. "I can't go any further; you must leave me here. Go on. Go on, I tell you."

Miles and a trooper carried him carefully into the shelter of a big bowlder, away from the track.

"You go on, Miles," were the first words he faltered. "I'm hit here," pointing to his chest, "and it's all over with me. Go—I desire you, never mind me—go, I implore you."

The irregular horse, all but two, had already vanished, considering that it was best to live and fight another day, not unnaturally believing that now behind every bowlder or rock lurked a score of natives and to the two who still remained Miles said:

"Gallop into camp as hard as you can lay legs to the ground, and send out an ambulance and a doctor. Go, there's no time to lose! I'll stay here!"

"No, no," interrupted his cousin, feebly; "you shall not. You would be mad—it means death."

"Nonsense, Teddy," returned Miles, resolutely; "for what do you take me? Is it likely that I should leave you? There's no fear; we shall be all right," quoting unconsciously Teddy's saying. The two troopers needed no second bidding, but, mounting at once, and setting spurs to their horses, were soon out of sight. So was the Marcher, Miles' horse, who, unpicketed and loose, followed them with streaming reins and a delicious sense of freedom; and then the last little speck of dust disappeared over the hill, and Miles and Teddy were left alone, with the gray mists of evening creeping gradually around them. The former removed Kitty's peaked saddle, and made it a pillow for her dying master; he put his own coat over him, after vainly endeavoring to stanch his wound—it was a bullet in the chest, and bled internally.

(To be continued.)

### Devonshire Vanity.

Many a refusal to sit for a picture has been given because of a knowledge of advancing years and fading beauty. It remains for the Devonshire folk, however, to give a new point on "making up" for a sitting. S. Baring-Gould's "Book of the West" supplies the incident.

The looks of Devonshire and Cornish lassies are proverbial. A complexion of peaches and cream, a well-proportioned body and well-molded features are the characteristics. West Country women, as they are called, cannot forget they were once comely.

An old woman of 75 was brought forward to be photographed by an amateur. No words of address could induce her to speak until the operation was completed. They set her fingers into her mouth.

She said: "You wouldn't ha' me took w' my cheeks fallen in? I just stuffed the Western Mornin' News into my mouth to fill 'em out."

Why does a man usually show his wife more courtesies abroad than at home?

## REPLIES TO CHINA.

### MCKINLEY DEFINES ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES.

President Offers to Mediate Under Certain Conditions for the Prevention of War with Europe and Division of the Celestial Empire.

Secretary of State Hay Monday afternoon handed to Minister Wu the reply of President McKinley to the appeal from Emperor Kuang Hsu to the United States to act as mediator and endeavor to bring about a settlement of the present troubles in China without war between China and the powers. The President consents to act as mediator, or rather to use the good offices of the United States to bring about co-operation by the powers with China for the purpose of carrying out the policy outlined in Secretary Hay's note of July 2 to the powers.

By consenting to act as mediator the President has assumed that Minister Wu and the Chinese authorities in Peking are acting in good faith. Secretary Hay did not even require any proof from Minister Wu that the request for mediation was genuine. He accepted the fact that it was presented at the State Department by the accredited diplomatic representative of the Chinese empire as sufficient guaranty of its authenticity. Meanwhile efforts will be pushed to relieve the ministers in Peking.

The position of the Chinese as they would like to have the world understand it is that the imperial government has at no time participated in the anti-foreign outbreak or in any attack upon the ministers or other foreigners, but has done all in its power to restrain and prevent such attacks; that the taking of the Taku forts by the powers was an act of war against China, and that the imperial government is justified in regarding with suspicion the motives of the powers, which, having previously despoiled the empire of territory, are now suspected of seeking opportunities to enlarge their territorial possessions.

The United States is the one power that is not suspected of coveting Chinese territory, and this fact, taken in connection with Rear Admiral Kempf's refusal to join in the attack on the Taku forts, is given as the reason why China has appealed to the United States to endeavor to bring about a peaceful settlement.

The understanding upon which the President consented to act is understood to be that the Chinese Government shall, so far as it is within its power to do so, bring about the objects which the United States announced as its purpose in Secretary Hay's note. These are:

"The opening up of communication with Peking and the rescue of the officials, missionaries and other Americans who are in danger.

"The affording of all possible protection everywhere in China to American life and property.

"The guarding and protecting of all legitimate American interests.

"The prevention of the spread of disorders to other provinces of the empire and of a recurrence of such disorders."

The first of these objects will have to be accomplished as preliminary to any action by the United States desired by the Chinese Government.

### CENSUS OF PORTO RICO.

The Most Densely Populated of Our New Possessions.

The results of the Porto Rican census, taken in October last, show that the island has 953,243 inhabitants. With a population of 264 to the square mile, Porto Rico is the most densely populated part of our new possessions. There is good reason why Porto Rico should have a far larger population, in proportion to area, than Cuba. The island was always the favored colony of the Spanish. For over two centuries Spain invited colonization. Lands were allotted gratis, while they lasted, and settlers were exempt from direct taxation. The interior, though very hilly, is well adapted for small farming. Most of the land is owned by the peasantry and small holders, fruit farms predominating, though there are many small coffee estates, as well as large and small farms raising sugar, tobacco and cattle. This is the reason why four-fifths of the population is scattered through the rural districts and only one-fifth live in the towns. Porto Rico is notably a country of small farmers. The island is still growing in population. Since 1887, the density has increased from 220 to 264 to the square mile. With good government, more schools, and larger commercial opportunities, there need be no pause in the development of Porto Rico. But not a few observers believe the island has population enough. There is little prospect that an increase in density would be advantageous.

### Telegraphic Brevities.

Yellow fever is said to be dying out in Havana.

John Shaw and Christopher Rents, Astoria, Ore., were killed by a boiler explosion.

Ben Heiders, farm hand, St. Louis, found dead on street car track. Perhaps murdered.

Dr. Nathaniel Sawyer, Frankfort, Ky., is missing in New York. Foul play feared. He went there June 29.

The board of naval construction has decided to recommend to the Navy Department the purchase of the submarine torpedo boat known as the "Improved Holland," the disposition of which was left open by Secretary Long when he bought the Holland.

John M. Roach, president of the Union Traction Company of Chicago, has outlined to the street railway commission a plan for a subway to relieve street traffic. It involves an equal sharing of the expenses between the two traction companies.

The Finnish Senate has addressed a memorial to the Czar declaring its inability to promulgate the imperial rescript regarding Russian language in Finland, the limitation of the right of public meeting and granting the right of Russians to carry on trades prohibited to Finns.

Rev. Charles M. Sheldon of Topeka, Kan., was questioned in London regarding the cable report of his nomination for the vice-presidency by the United Christian party, and said: "My name has been proposed without authority. I have no intention of accepting the nomination."

## MOB RULE IN NEW ORLEANS.

Four Negroes Killed and Many Others Are Shot.

A mob took possession of the streets of New Orleans Wednesday night and before it dispersed of its own accord had killed four negroes and wounded a dozen men, three of whom were white. The lawlessness grew out of the murder the day before of two policemen by Robert Charles, a negro.

The mob, several thousand strong, formed at Lee Circle and marched on Charles avenue in a body. It was reported that the mob would march upon the parish prison and demand the negro Pierce, who was with Charles when the police officers were killed. The police accordingly sent strong re-enforcements to the prison, and when the mob made its appearance the leaders were told that as effort to secure the prisoner would be resisted to the end. The members of the mob slowly dispersed, and scattering to several parts of the city. Many negroes who were on the streets and riding in cars were fired on.

Just before midnight Acting Mayor Mehe issued a proclamation calling on all good citizens to aid the authorities in preserving the peace and to let justice take its course. As a result of the night's lawlessness four men are dead, a score severely wounded, a hundred bruised.

Not since the lynching of the Italians several years ago has there been such excitement in New Orleans. The funerals of Captain Day and Patrolman Lamb took place Wednesday afternoon, and this served to intensify the feeling of their friends.

### CUBA FRAUD REPORT.

Bristow Says Rathbone Is Only Less Guilty than Neely.

Official investigation of the Cuban postal frauds, made by Fourth Assistant Postmaster General Bristow has resulted in the declaration that Director General Rathbone is guilty of gross official neglect and also of fraudulent practices; that his guilt is only less than that of Charles F. W. Neely and the latter's subordinate accomplices, and that deposed Postmaster Thompson of Havana is involved in the network of fraud. These findings are made public in the report of Mr. Bristow.

Mr. Bristow finds that Neely's embezzlements aggregated at least \$131,713, and says he was justified in recommending the removal of Director General Rathbone. Whether or not the latter was guilty with Neely in the embezzlements, he says, there can be no doubt that in the matter of unauthorized per diem allowances, personal expenses and warrants cashed and unaccounted for, he unlawfully appropriated to his own use money of the Cuban revenues. For this, Mr. Bristow says, he believes Mr. Rathbone should be required to answer.

### "VANDERBILT OF CHINA."

Prince Sheng, One of the Leaders of the Celestial Empire.

A Celestial who is playing a somewhat conspicuous part in the present troubles in China is Prince Sheng, the director of telegraphs, and who is said to be one of the most capable, intelligent and broad-minded of men in China. He has had charge not only of the telegraphs, but of the railways also. He is the head of the imperial bank, a position akin to the secretaryship of the treasury, and he is the principal director of the China Merchant Steamship Company and the leader of a dozen remarkable enterprises. Sheng has shown a remarkable capacity for the absorption of the western business spirit and has been quick to realize the wealth that is to be created out of the undeveloped conditions and resources of China. He was first brought out by Li Hung Chang, who became his patron, but Sheng soon displayed talents which promised to enable him to surpass his eminent friend in modern enterprise if not in statecraft. He has been called the "Vanderbilt of China."

### Few-Line Interviews.

Mrs. J. K. Jones, wife of the Senator who is perhaps better known as the chairman of the Democratic national committee, in answer to an inquiry regarding her opinion of women in politics, said, among other things: "I think woman's place is at home, ministering to the comfort of husband and children. My sphere has always been home. I do think, though, that all women should read and understand as much as they can about leading questions; so they can be interested in what interests their husbands. I am not a member of any club or organization. The money question doesn't bother me at all. So long as there is plenty of money I don't care what kind it is. Besides, I am for whatever my husband wishes, whether it is right or wrong."

### The Political Kypof.

Ho Yow, Chinese consul general in San Francisco, a diplomat only second in importance in this country to the Chinese minister in Washington, says of the Chinese: "The Chinese are well armed. They are well supplied with weapons of the latest pattern, many of them manufactured in our own great arsenals. Shantung province is notable for its men of fine physique and stature. This province could probably place in the field a large force, all closely approaching or exceeding six feet in height. Whatever China may have been in the past, she is no insignificant enemy to cope with to-day. Her strength is formidable, and if it is to be underestimated by invaders the result will be terrible slaughter."

Minister Wu has revised his opinion of the "local disturbances" in China. He now says: "My Government has its hands completely tied. They are unable to handle mobs, as many of the soldiers they are already so for some reason, and desert to the enemies of the Government. What could one possibly do under the circumstances? I am deeply grieved, and most sincerely trust that the information contained in the press dispatches is not true. If it should prove to be so my worst fears are realized, and I am unable to tell what the outcome will be."

Capt. T. C. Pearce of the national fish commission says about fish in Illinois and vicinity: "If we make any distribution in Illinois this year, we doubtless will furnish the sanitary canal with its share of fish. In my judgment the several varieties of bass would be the best fish to place in Illinois streams. We have spent most of the winter in northern Michigan and western Indiana, and have distributed trout, whitefish and white perch in Lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior."

Pride goes before a punctured tire.



Iowa people are talking much of Minister Conger these days, and recall with pride the fact that he gained his start in public life while a resident of that State. The Des Moines Capital says that when Mr. Conger returned to Iowa after his second term as minister to Brazil, his fellow-citizens, in view of his distinction, had planned a demonstration in his honor. The minister was met at the train and welcomed his family and friends gladly. But when he heard of the reception plans he immediately showed his modesty and said:

"If you do what will please me, you'll not have anything of the kind. I have simply done my duty as any other American citizen in like position would do, and am no hero. I do not think that any public demonstration would be proper, and I know I do not want it."

The demonstration never occurred.

Minister Conger met and wooed and won his wife at Lombard University, Galesburg, Ill. It was a college match, as both bride and groom were attending school together there. The bride was Miss Sarah J. Pike, and the match was a romantic one. Both were attracted to the other by their brightness in classes and by the good spirit which pervaded every action and word. This was in ante-bellum days, and the firing on Fort Sumter put a temporary end to their love making, as cruel war intervened. Mr. Conger went away to war, serving with gallantry and distinction, rising to the rank of major. During his absence Miss Pike was true to him and kept in touch by constant watch and continued correspondence. The years spent apart only intensified their affection, and they were married when the war was over, the school days' courtship resulting in thirty-four years of happy wedded life. They were married at Galesburg in 1860, and there Maj. Conger practiced law for a time, then moved to the farm near Dexter.

The story is told of a Chinese Mandarin who early learned that Mr. Conger was not to be balked or bluffed. A missionary of the American Bible Society, provided with passports and credentials, was stopped by the officials and held in the military quarters on some paltry trumped-up charge. The missionary sent word to Minister Conger, and the minister went in person to see about it. When he learned the trivial nature of the trouble he demanded the release of the missionary, saying he was an American citizen, and as such his rights must be respected.

"But my orders are to hold him here," said the officer.

"And my orders from the United States are to demand his release."

"He must stay here until it suits his majesty to release him."

"The United States of America demands his immediate release," quietly rejoined Minister Conger, "and we're used to getting what we want."

The missionary was given his freedom at once.

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