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CHAPTER II.

The soldier artist resumed his seat as Alice rode away, and sat and watched her until a head in the trail hid her from his eyes. He had often seen the young girl at a distance and had admired her graceful figure and light, springy step, but had never before had an opportunity to closely observe her face. As she sat on her pony bowed over his sketch he had studied her features, and he thought he had never seen so beautiful a girl. Her sunny disposition flashed brightly from her laughing blue eyes, and the lingering echoes of her low, sweet voice resounded in his ears in pleasing melody long after she had gone.

There was a marked stir in the social circles of the garrison when an official communication from the war

THE SOLDIER ARTIST RESUMED HIS SEAT.

department to the commanding officer advised him that Mr. Alfred Talbot, Vanover, a recent graduate from West Point, had been commissioned a second lieutenant and assigned to B troop, Sixth cavalry, then stationed at Fort Craig. Lieut. Vanover was coming under orders to report to Col. Sanford for duty.

At a border military post the officers and their families live in a little world of their own. The social circle at one of these remote garrisons may best be described as a military family, the members of which are drawn into close relationship by isolation from the great busy world to the eastward. Within the limits of this circle the strongest ties of friendship are formed, and the frequent social parties which serve as oases to break the monotony of the desert of garrison life seem more as family gatherings than fashionable affairs. A brotherly and sisterly feeling exists among the officers and ladies whose lot is cast so far away from the borders of civilization, and when by that immovable decree, a military order, an officer is transferred to a distant post the departure of himself and family, if he be married, creates a break in the family circle which is as sincerely mourned as would be the departure for a far distant point of a member of a home circle in private life.

The remaining members of a military family suffer a sense of bereavement which can scarcely be conceived by those not familiar with garrison life, and the departure of a member is as sincerely mourned as if bound to those to whom he bids an indefinite farewell by ties of blood.

A prospective addition to the military family is always a matter of much comment. When the accession is to be that of an officer of more or less service in the field his coming is looked forward to with great pleasure, for in almost, if not quite, every instance he will be known to some of the officers at the post. In some of the labyrinthine movements of the great army machine they have been thrown together at different posts, then separated by the official order and sent, unrumored, to meet the exigencies of the service at widely separated points. When it is announced at a post that Capt. and Mrs. Sinclair are to be stationed there, those who have never met the expected arrivals are enlightened as to their personal appearance, traits of character and social attainments by those who have been with them at other posts, and the officer and his lady are received with as warm recognition by those who have never before seen them as by their friends of old.

But it is different when the announcement is made that a newly created officer will soon knock for admission into the garrison family. He will come as a stranger to all. Those officers who themselves in turn stepped from the floor of the academy at West Point into the field of active service as the expected newcomer is about to do, are well aware of the mild form of torture which awaits them. They know that Mr. Graduate will burst upon their vision clad in natty attire which the purifying breezes have not yet had time to purge of the odor of the tailor shop. He will not have been in the garrison a day ere his trunks will have been emptied of their contents, and the love trophies they contain exhibited to the seemingly patient group who sit meekly listening to the pretty young man as he boasts of his conquests in the rose of the academy. They will smile serenely as his velvet tongue purrs on, and the time-dimmed canvas of their own memory brightens and presents for their edification the day when they, too, came gliding

into the service arena in the same state of innocent insanity. They will not tell him so in words, but will mentally say to him:

"A sad case, a very sad case, my dear boy, but you will get over it. Just a little campaigning, a little of the hard-ship incident to border military life will wear the academy glitter from you, and you will develop in time into a man of more sturdy mold whose aspirations will crave something more substantial than the melody of a softly sung love ditty or the giggling smile of a smirking schoolgirl. Those withered bouquets bearing the distinguishing names of Rose and Blanche and Agnes and Katie and other fair uniform worshippers now so precious to you, will soon find judgment in the coal scuttle; those daily perfumed notes will go upward in the smoke of the grate; the oft-blessed phots will lie neglected in your trunk in the store-room, and the memory of the dear but-terflies who cared little for you, but who loved to flutter around your gray uniform and hurl glances of defiance at pouting rivals, will be but as a hazy dream, which you will not in your maturer sense care for memory to produce in too strong coloring. You will not be so fastidious in dressing for the saddle and the field as you were in dressing for the ballroom, or to keep an appointment with the latest 'plump quail' who had fallen a victim to your military air and brass buttons. Enjoy your trophies while you may, my boy, for stern duty will soon bid you shake off the aspect of the beau and don the more earnest air of the soldier."

Lieut. Vanover came, and was at once located in bachelor quarters and listed for duty. Capt. and Mrs. Colby, as the oldest in point of residence at the post, announced a reception in honor of the new officer, and on the evening designated the parlor of the Colby quarters was well filled with officers and ladies. Lieut. Vanover was introduced to all, and was cordially welcomed into the society of the garrison. He proved to be a quite handsome young gentleman, and had brought with him a smile which no doubt played sad havoc with maidenly hearts at the alma mater on the historic Hudson, yet beneath the surface gleamed a look of stern imperiousness, if not cruel nature, which the smiling face could not entirely conceal. He was studiously polite in his demeanor toward the ladies and endeavored to be a "hail fellow well met" among the gentlemen, but a sort of repellant glance which at times shone from his eyes went far toward smothering the warmth with which both gentlemen and ladies would have gladly welcomed him.

Alice was at the party and was exquisitely lovely in her dress of purest white. She was the special idol of the ladies of the garrison, and there was more than one dissatisfied look on the more matronly faces when it was observed that Vanover seemed to be greatly smitten with her charming presence and grace of manner. He was devoted to her, and was not to be fair girl, so much so in fact that his astiduity really annoyed her, and to escape him she excused herself at the earliest moment consistent with politeness and went to her home.

The young officer evidently classed Alice in the same category with the frivolous young ladies without whose presence life at West Point would have to him been unendurable. His vanity told him that the girl with her mother's instinct treated his shyly at the first meeting she could not long resist his charms, and would soon listen to his protestations of alleged love as rapturously as a score of girls had done during his cadetship. Hence, at their every future meeting he aimed his every shaft of wit, eloquence, compliment and flattery at the citadel of her vanity, and was not surprised at her failure to open with its gate and bid him enter as its conqueror. She treated him with marked politeness at all times, yet in her heart wished that their meetings might be as the visits of angels in the olden age.

It was not long before it began to be whispered about that Lieut. Vanover was tyrannical and imperiously lordly in his treatment of the men who came under his supervision, when he served as officer of the guard, and had been at times insulting in his relations with the men of his own troop in the quarters. No complaints were made, however, and the rumors were lightly treated until one day Sergt. Barrett, an old trooper who had grown gray in the service, went to headquarters and asked for an interview with the commanding officer. His request was promptly granted, for Col. Sanford was always accessible to the men under him. The old sergeant entered the office, and removing his cap and saluting the commander stood like a statue awaiting permission to speak.

"What is it, sergeant?" the colonel asked.

"Sir, I have been a soldier for more than twenty years, and this is the first time I have ever made a complaint. I would have gone to the captain or my sergeant, but he is absent from post on a hunt, and the officer of whom I would complain is temporarily in command of the troop. I do not think, sir, there is a man in the service who feels more respect for his superior officers than I do, or who is more prompt at recognizing their rank than when I meet them. Lieut. Vanover came into the

quarters an hour ago just as I was leaving the room, and I saluted him as was my duty. A moment later I was standing on the porch just outside the door when he came out, and I assumed the position of a soldier and waited for him to pass. No officer who has been any length of time in the service would have desired or expected a salute from my salute, but the lieutenant stepped up and shook his fist at me and roughly said:

"What do you mean, fellow? Do you know who I am? Why do you not salute me?"

I tried to explain to him, but he crossed to me to shut up, and said he would teach me the respect due an officer. He then placed me under arrest. Sir, I served as a private soldier for six years and was never in the guardhouse as a prisoner, and during my fourteen years' service as a non-commissioned officer I have never until now been under arrest, and it hurts me, sir. He humbled me before some of the men of my troop, but I don't mind that so much as the disgrace he has fastened to me.

"Is that all that passed between you, sergeant?"

"That is all, sir. The lieutenant used some language that he would be ashamed to use toward a soldier of my service after he has been in the army awhile, but I do not complain of that. I wish the disgrace of arrest wiped from my long record, sir, that is all."

"If it will in any manner soothe your wounded feelings, sergeant, I will say to you that I have known you for a long time and have always regarded you as a model soldier. You can go to your quarters. I will look into the matter."

The sergeant saluted and retired, and an orderly was dispatched to summon Lieut. Vanover to headquarters. The young officer had from his window seen the sergeant leave the office, and instinctively felt that his unwarranted action had been reported to the colonel. He entered the commander's presence with a timid air, and seated himself in a chair pushed toward him.

"Lieutenant, you have placed Sergt. Barrett of your troop under arrest."

"Yes, sir, for showing me disrespect."

"In what manner?"

"He failed to salute me when I passed him, and retorted when I reprimanded him."

"Had he not saluted you in a proper and respectful manner but a moment before?"

"Yes, sir, but then I was entering the quarters. He did not recognize me when I came out any more than he would have done one of his own companions."

"In what language did he retort when you reprimanded him?"

"He endeavored to excuse himself for his his words of military discipline. His words were respectful, sir, but the expression on his face was not."

"A look of pain at the unmerited disgrace you had inflicted on him, or one of contempt?"

"Contempt, sir. Unmistakable contempt."

"Out of respect for your rank, Lieut. Vanover, the sergeant should have tried to hide his feelings. I wish to say to you, sir, that Sergt. Barrett



VANOVER SEEMED TO BE GREATLY SMITTEN.

was a tried and true soldier when you were a puling infant in your mother's arms. I have known him for many years, and in all of his long and faithful service this is the first blot ever cast on his record. He is a man filled by education and long service to fit a position above the one you now occupy. Sergt. Barrett is a soldier who is not at all lacking in respect for his superiors in rank. Were I to meet him and receive and acknowledge his salute and on turning around he should salute me again, I would think he had been drinking, sir, and would pardon his excessive manifestation of respect on that ground. I believe I have nothing more to say to you, sir, further than that your hasty order placing this man under arrest must be instantly revoked."

Stung to the quick at this official rebuke, the lieutenant sought his quarters. An order was at once sent to the non-commissioned officer annulling the verbal order of arrest, and directing him to report to the first sergeant of his troop for duty.

Lieut. Vanover and Miss Sanford frequently met, and it did not take the young officer long to learn that any attention shown her outside the bounds of ordinary politeness and courtesy would be met with marked displeasure. He was really desperately in love with the beautiful girl, and did not despair of arousing in her heart a responsive emotion; but her attitude toward him told him all too plainly that he could never gain her favor through the medium of light flattery and gallant attention which had proved so effective in transitory love affairs at "The Point." He soon ceased to force his attentions upon her, and tried to be content to wait and hope. He felt that his charm of manner was irresistible—dozens of girls had told him so in moonlight wanderings—and he did not doubt that at some future day the fair girl would strike her colors and capitulate.

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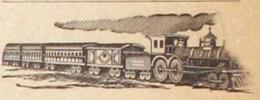


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Hummer, daily	7:20 a.m.
Express except Sunday	6:25 a.m.
Mail arrives	4:00 p.m.
Joliet Accom. Ex. Sunday	6:05 p.m.
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No. 1, mail	11:47 a.m.
No. 7, express freight	5:15 a.m.
No. 15, express freight	5:21 a.m.
No. 2, mail	5:17 a.m.
No. 8, express freight	7:50 a.m.
All trains daily except Nos. 1 and 4	4:00 a.m.
Nos. 3 and 4 stop at all stations.	4:00 a.m.

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On and after Dec. 30th, 1894, and until further notice, trains carrying passengers will leave Irbacaville as follows:

No. 1, Express Mail	4:25 a.m.
No. 5, Atlantic Express	10:47 a.m.
No. 7, K. C. & St. L. Express	5:31 a.m.
No. 9, Chicago Accommodation	5:31 a.m.
No. 63, Joliet Express (Sunday only)	9:10 a.m.
No. 31, Way Freight	12:15 p.m.
No. 17, Joliet Accommodation ex Sun.	7:23 p.m.

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No. 7, daily

No. 9, Accommodation

No. 63, Denver, except Sunday

No. 1, mail, daily

No. 10, Accommodation, daily

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