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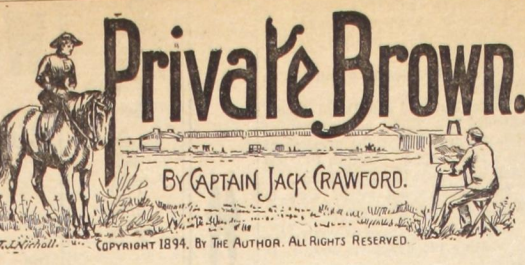
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(CONTINUED.)

A slight blush mantled the cheeks of the young girl at these parting words. After she had gone Mrs. Colby sank into a chair and carefully weighed every feature of the strange story, and was yet deeply engrossed in thought when the captain entered.

"George," he said to him, "do you know anything of Private Brown of your troop?"

"Brown? Yes. He has several times attracted my attention. He is a splendid young soldier, I believe, always unusually neat in personal appearance, and at times when he has been on duty as orderly at my quarters I have noted his intelligent language and gentlemanly bearing. He distinguished himself in a noticeable manner in several of our brushes with the Apaches last winter, and I have him listed for promotion when there is a vacancy. Why do you ask, my dear?"

"I have a very remarkable story to tell you, George, if you will promise me that you will never divulge it without my permission, not even to Brown himself."

"Well, it must be a startlingly important secret. Will you please in any manner conflict with my duty as an officer?"

"Not in the least, my dear, or I would not exact it of you."

"Then I promise I am all attention." She told the story as Alice had related it to her, and the captain's eyes opened wide with astonishment.

"By Jove, wife, I am inclined to believe the man has told the truth. I have never had occasion to give him extra notice further than I mentioned, yet in the light of this revelation I can recall many of his actions which go to corroborate what you have told me. I must keep my eyes on him in future."

Alice went at once to her father and related to him the story Brown had told her. The old man at first evinced considerable interest in the recital, but at its conclusion said:

"All nonsense, Sunshine, all hosh. You must not place any credence in the wild cock and bull stories the soldiers tell. Look after the sick men in the hospital, child, and let the well ones take care of themselves."

"Did I do wrong, papa, in listening to him and showing my interest in his work?"

"My little Sunshine could not do wrong. If this man has interested you with his skill with the pencil, I am glad of it. Your life is cast amid very sober surroundings, little one, and anything that affords you pleasure and helps you to while away the dull hours has my full approval. If a big, honest-eyed Newfoundland dog should come to you for recognition it would be no wrong for you to pat him on the shaggy head and call him pet names. If a private soldier interests you and possesses intelligence enough to treat you as becomes your station in the world above him, amuse yourself with him all you desire. Even listen to their fairy stories if you wish. Soldiers love to boast of what they might have been had they not been crowded into the army by some remarkable circumstances. Their romances are all hosh, Sunshine, all frothy hosh."

CHAPTER VI.

Leut. Vandever was industrious in acquiring a knowledge of horsemanship, for a call to field duty might be made at any moment in the then unsettled state of the Indians. In his daily rides about the post and down the river he frequently met Miss Sanford and sometimes rode beside her. Her treatment of him was always polite, yet she maintained toward him an air of modest reserve which warned him that any resumption of former gallantry would meet with her disapproval. On several occasions he had passed by when herself and Private Brown were sitting together, bending over a sketch or quietly conversing, and it shocked him to see the daughter of the commander on terms of such seeming familiarity with a man in the ranks. In his estimation, the private soldiers were mere soulless machines, who moved only at the official beck and call, but puppets in exalted hands, and a lump of indignant resentment stuck in his throat at the thought that the maiden could grant to a vulgar private the sociability she denied him.

On one of his daily rides he overtook her in the river bottom just as she had reined in her pony to make the ascent of the steep hill leading to the fort. He politely saluted her by raising his cap, and she acknowledged the salutation with a bow and pleasant smile.

"It has been a beautiful afternoon for riding, Miss Sanford," he said.

"It has indeed, Mr. Vandever. I think the New Mexico climate cannot be surpassed in loveliness in the whole world."

"The climate is all right, but the society is open to severe criticism," he replied. "The native people are but half civilized and the Americans are rough and, and it does strike me as being somewhat severe that the ladies and gentlemen of the army are compelled to exist amid such uncongenial surroundings."

"O, you are too hard on the people of the territory," she replied. "I have a number of valued friends among the good people of San Marcial, the town just above the fort, both native and American, and I have always found them congenial, whole-souled, courteous neighbors. You will modify your views of them when you come to know them. Even were we cast away a thousand miles from civilization, I am sure we could be a happy community. We are a little world in ourselves, Mr. Vandever."

"A rather insignificant world," he replied. "You can almost enumerate its population on your fingers. A dozen or so officers, and half as many ladies."

"And several hundred soldiers," she added.

"O, the soldiers cut no figure in our world, save as slaves to our bidding. The rif-ruff of the land must not be mentioned in the same breath with ladies and gentlemen. A gentleman to be obliged to command such fellows."

Her face flushed with anger, and turning her clear blue eyes full upon his face she replied in biting words:

"Lieut. Vandever, clothes and rank do not make the man. Indeed, in my own experience, I have known the gaudy uniform of the officer to cover far less manly instincts and actions than I have noted beneath the plain garb of the private soldier."

They had reached the summit of the hill, and touching the rein she galloped unceremoniously away, leaving him biting his lips in confusion.

He rode to the stable and, dismounting, threw the rein to an attendant and started to his quarters in a far from pleasant frame of mind. As he hastily turned a corner of the stables he ran into Private Brown, who was hastening thither on some errand. The shock threw the lieutenant to the ground, and instantly recognizing in the soldier the man in whose company he had often seen Alice Sanford, his rage was great. Springing to his feet he hoarsely shouted:

"What do you mean, sir? How dare you run against me like that manner?"

Brown respectfully saluted him and replied:

"I beg your pardon, sir. You turned the corner in such haste that you ran into me before I could get out of your way."

"You lie, sir, when you say I ran into you. It was your damnable carelessness that caused the collision. I am not sure that you did not purposefully run against me."

Brown's blood boiled at the epithet applied to him, and the expression of anger on his face increased the officer's rage.

"Lieutenant, your words are harsh even for a superior to use toward an inferior in rank. I am not a liar, sir, and my manhood revolts when such a term is applied to me when I am powerless to resent it."

"Don't you dare talk back to me, you scoundrel! How dare you hint at resentment to your superior officer, you menial cur?"

Human endurance could stand no more. Brown's face paled with righteous rage, and, losing all control of his

temper, he sent a well-directed blow into the lieutenant's face, knocking him from his feet.

HUMAN ENDURANCE COULD STAND NO MORE.

CHAPTER VII.

A number of the stable attendants who had witnessed the altercation ran to the spot and assisted the officer to rise. His nose was bleeding profusely from the blow, and in obedience to his command a guard was summoned and Brown was marched away to the guard house.

Seated on a bunk in a gloomy cell his anger cooled and he awoke to a realizing sense of what he had done. In civil life he would have been applauded for so promptly resenting an intentional insult, but in the army it was different. Violence offered by a private soldier to an officer is a most serious offense, and one which under army rules demands severe punishment. While it is true that the officer's conduct toward him was highly reprehensible and such as would lay him liable to official investigation, that fact did not in the least mitigate his offense. Had he quietly submitted to Vandever's abuse he would have been justified in seeking redress in the proper official quarter and justice would have been done him, but he had allowed his anger to override his better judgment, and now he was in for it and must suffer the consequences.

What would Alice think of him? Would she pass hastily judgment on his act before seeking the details? Would she not now regard him as a quarrelsome bully, and deem him unworthy of her friendship? The thought troubled him, and as he paced back and forth in the forbidding gloom of the cell he was very miserable. His gratitude toward the girl for taking so

kindly an interest in him had ripened into a love which seemed to consume him. Although no word indicative of his new feeling toward her had ever been breathed in her presence, he felt that she must instinctively know that he loved her, and her eyes had on more than one occasion told him that her friendship toward him was gaining an intensity which might some day develop into a far more tender passion. In his dreamy moments he had even dared to picture a future wherein their mutual love would light the path down which they wandered hand in hand, and now by one rash act he may have blighted the bud of affection which was swelling toward bursting in her young heart—have blighted it so completely that even the sun of future vindication might fall to warm it into life again.

In the midst of his gloomy reflections the heavy cell door swung open, and Capt. Colby entered.

"Brown," he said, "what was the trouble between yourself and Lieut. Vandever?"

"Captain, I have been guilty of a most serious offense, and in the light of calm reflection I do most deeply regret it. I was grossly insulted, sir, and in my rage I lost sight of the officer and saw only the man who was heaping indignities upon me. My position as a soldier was forgotten, and I resented the insult as I would have done in civil life—as any gentleman would have done, sir."

"Will you tell me without any reservation or palliating coloring just what occurred between you?"

Brown related all the details in a truthful manner. While he felt that in the eyes of anyone possessing a sense of justice his blow would seem justifiable, he admitted that he had been guilty of a serious infraction of army law, and avowed that he would humbly submit to any punishment a court-martial might inflict upon him.

"I am sorry that occurred, Brown, very sorry. Your conduct ever since you joined my troop has been most exemplary, and I have hoped to soon be able to offer you promotion. I fear that this matter will go hard with you. Col. Sanford is a most severe disciplinarian, and an assault by a private soldier upon a commissioned officer will assume most grievous proportions in his eyes. He will insist upon your trial by court-martial, and his views on this question are so well known to the officers of the post that those who try you will, should you be convicted, feel that severe punishment must follow. I can only hope the palliating circumstances may bear due weight with both the commander and the members of the court."

He passed out, leaving Brown again alone with his bitter thoughts.

Lieut. Vandever lost no time in endeavoring to poison the minds of his brother officers against his assailant. He pictured him as a brawny bully of a pugnacious nature, and loudly averred that a long term of years in a military prison was the punishment he richly deserved. His words bore little weight, however, for the young lieutenant had become most thoroughly disliked by every officer in the garrison. While there was no outward demonstration to establish the fact, there was not one of them but secretly rejoiced that he had been so promptly chastised for his unofficerlike conduct.

And what of Alice? That young lady acted in a most remarkable manner when the details of the affair reached her ears through Mrs. Colby. She did not turn pale and weep and wring her hands in inconsolable anguish in the conventional way. Not she. A great smile of satisfaction spread over her pretty face, a glad look increased the usual brightness of her eyes, and she poured out the pent-up fervor of her soul in giving emphasis to the one word:

"Good!"

She thought not then of rank or station nor of any punishment that her friend might be called upon to endure, but only saw a righteous blow struck at insolence and insult by the strong arm of manhood.

It was not at all unusual for the commanding officer's daughter to send some of the surplus to her own table to soldiers who might be confined in the guardhouse, and when she ordered from headquarters brought a platter of catables to the sergeant of the guard and said it was for Private Brown of B troop, it was passed in to the prisoner without a questioning word. With the belief that some sympathizing comrade had sent the viands from the troop messroom he set it aside until he should feel hungry, and when he at last uncovered the contents of the dish and noted that it contained pieces of pie and cake and other delicacies not to be found in the culinary department of

the soldier quarters, a glad smile spread over his erstwhile troubled face, for he knew it must have come from Alice. Raising a slice of cake from the bottom of the dish he discovered that it had been concealing a folded piece of paper, and eagerly unfolding it he ran to the dim light of the grated window and read these words:

"You would have been less a man in my eyes had you acted otherwise. I admire you for seeing an insult from one lacking in manhood. A. S."

BY THE DIM LIGHT HE READ THESE WORDS.

THE SOLDIER QUARTERS, A GLAD SMILE SPREAD OVER HIS ERSTWHILE TROUBLED FACE, FOR HE KNEW IT MUST HAVE COME FROM ALICE.

Raising a slice of cake from the bottom of the dish he discovered that it had been concealing a folded piece of paper, and eagerly unfolding it he ran to the dim light of the grated window and read these words:

"You would have been less a man in my eyes had you acted otherwise. I admire you for seeing an insult from one lacking in manhood. A. S."

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"CELLULOID" COLLARS AND CUFFS are made by covering a linen collar or cuff with "celluloid," thus making them strong, durable and waterproof. When soiled they can be cleaned by simply wiping off with a wet cloth. No other waterproof goods are made with this interlining, consequently no other goods can possibly give satisfaction. Do not forget that every piece of the genuine is stamped as follows:

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DWIGHT

C. & A. Time Table

NORTH.

Express, daily..... 5:10 a. m.

Accom. daily except Sunday, leaves..... 6:40 a. m.

HUMBER, daily..... 7:30 a. m.

Express except Sunday..... 10:23 a. m.

Wall daily..... 4:00 p. m.

Joliet Accom. Ex. Sunday..... 6:50 p. m.

Sunday Accommodation..... 8:45 a. m.

Way Freight except Sunday..... 11:30 a. m.

SOUTH.

Bloomington Accom. ex. Sunday..... 7:25 a. m.

Wall daily..... 11:42 a. m.

Kansas City Exp., except Sunday..... 4:35 p. m.

Accom. daily, arrives..... 8:45 p. m.

HUMBER, daily..... 7:53 p. m.

St. Louis Express daily..... 11:00 p. m.

St. Louis & Kansas City Ex., daily..... 2:40 a. m.

Way Freight except Sunday..... 10:40 a. m.

BRANCH TRAINS.

WEST.

Accom. 'tween Freight except Sunday..... 7:00 a. m.

Mail Leaves except Sunday..... 4:45 p. m.

EAST.

Mail Arrives except Sunday..... 10:15 a. m.

Accom. 'tween Freight except Sunday..... 10:30 p. m.

J. CHARLTON, G. P. & T. A. V. E. DOTY, Agent.

Illinois Central Time Table

PONTIAC, ILL.

GOING SOUTH AND WEST.

Passenger..... 8:00 a. m.

Freight..... 9:30 a. m.

NORTH AND EAST.

Passenger..... 4:20 p. m.

Freight..... 10:08 p. m.

Close connections at Alton and Kankakee for all points north, east, south and west. All trains carry par engers.

W. J. BUTLER, Agent, Pontiac, Ill.

I. I. I. Time Table.

On and after Sunday, December 16, 1894, trains will leave Dwight as follows:

TRAINS EAST.

No. 2, Mail..... 5:17 a. m.

No. 8, Local..... 9:10 a. m.

No. 14, express freight..... 2:01 p. m.

TRAINS WEST.

No. 1, Mail..... 11:57 a. m.

No. 7, Local..... 5:25 p. m.

No. 13 carries passengers to Kankakee and Mokena only.

C. W. COOK, Gen'l Pass. Agent.

T. M. BATES, Supt. J. B. FRANCE, Agent.

C. & A. Time Table.

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

NORTH OR EAST.

No. 1, Express Mail..... 4:25 p. m.

No. 2, Pacific Express..... 4:42 p. m.

No. 7, K. C. & St. L. Expre..... 5:31 a. m.

No. 9, Chicago Accommodation..... 6:27 a. m.

No. 10, Joliet Accommodation..... 9:10 a. m.

No. 31, Way Freight..... 12:23 p. m.

No. 17, Joliet Accommodation ex. Sun. 7:23 p. m.

SOUTH.

No. 2, Express Mail..... 11:18 a. m.

No. 8, Pacific Express..... 4:12 p. m.

No. 8, K. C. & St. L. Expre..... 5:14 a. m.

No. 18, Bloomington Accom. ex. Sun. 7:26 a. m.

No. 10, Joliet Accommodation..... 9:10 a. m.

No. 32, Way Freight..... 8:40 a. m.

J. Charlton, G. P. & T. A. J. O. RAINEY, Gen. Pas. and Ticket Agt. Local Agent.

Gardner C. & A. Time-Table.

NORTH:

No. 7, daily..... 5:25 a. m.

No. 9, Accommodation..... 6:20 a. m.

No. 63, Sunday..... 9:02 a. m.

No. 6, Denver, Except..... 11:41 a. m.

No. 1, mail, daily..... 4:17 p. m.

No. 18, Accommodation Ex. Sunday..... 7:15 p. m.

Way Freight, except Sunday..... 12:25 a. m.

SOUTH:

No. 15, Accommodation Ex. Sunday..... 7:24 a. m.

No. 2, mail, daily..... 4:47 a. m.

No. 6, Denver, except Sunday..... 4:40 p. m.

No. 10, Accommodation, daily..... 8:20 a. m.

No. 8, daily..... 8:20 a. m.

Way Freight..... 9:10 a. m.

Way Freight, except Sunday..... 12:25 a. m.

W. C. JOYNT, Local Agent. J. CHARLTON, G. P. & T. A. Local Agent.

Big Four Route.

Commencing Sunday, Mar. 11th, 1894, trains pass Gardner as follows:

GOING WEST.

No. 201..... 10:05 a. m.

No. 503..... 5:25 p. m.

GOING EAST.

No. 202..... 8:15 a. m.

No. 32, daily except Sunday..... 4:10 p. m.

All trains except Sunday, 9:10 a. m.

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