

CAPTAIN MACKLIN

HIS MEMOIRS

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It may seem presumptuous that so young a man as myself should propose to write his life and memoirs, for as a rule one waits until he has accomplished something in the world, or until he has reached old age, before he ventures to tell of the times in which he has lived, and of his part in them. But the profession to which I belong, which is that of a soldier, and which is the noblest profession a man can follow, is a hazardous one, and were I to delay until to-morrow to write down what I have seen and done, these memoirs might never be written, for, such being the fortune of war, to-morrow might not come.

So I propose to tell now of the little I have accomplished in the first twenty-three years of my life, and, from month to month, to add to these memoirs in order that, should I be suddenly taken off, my debit and credit pages may be found carefully written up to date and carried forward. On the other hand, should I live to be an old man, this record of my career will furnish me with material for a more complete autobiography, and will serve as a safeguard against a failing memory.

In writing a personal narrative I take it that the most important events to be chronicled in the life of a man are his choice of a wife and his choice of a profession. As I am unmarried, the chief event in my life is my choice of a profession, and as to that, as a matter of fact, I was given no choice, but from my earliest childhood was destined to be a soldier. My education and my daily environment each pointed to that career, and even if I had shown a remarkable aptitude for any other calling, which I did not, I doubt if I would have pursued it. I am confident that had my education been directed in an entirely different channel, I should have followed my destiny, and come out a soldier in the end. For by inheritance as well as by instinct I was foreordained to

follow the fortunes of war, to delight in the clash of arms and the smoke of battle; and I expect that when I do hear the clash of arms and smell the smoke of battle, the last of the Macklins will prove himself worthy of his ancestors.

I call myself the last of the Macklins for the reason that last year, on my twenty-second birthday, I determined I should never marry. Women I respect and admire, several of them, especially two of the young ladies at Miss Butler's Academy I have deeply loved, but a soldier cannot devote himself both to a woman and to his country. As one of our young professors said, "The flag is a jealous mistress."

The one who, in my earliest childhood, arranged that I should follow the profession of arms, was my mother's father, and my only surviving grandparent. He was no less a personage than Major-General John M. Hamilton. I am not a writer; my sword, I fear and hope, will always be easier in my hand than my pen, but I wish for a brief moment I could hold it with such skill, that I might tell of my grandfather properly and gratefully, and describe him as the gentle and brave man he was. I know he was gentle, for though I never had a woman to care for me as a mother cares for a son, I never missed that care; and I know how brave he was, for that is part of the history of my country. During many years he was my only parent or friend or companion; he taught me my lessons by day and my prayers by night, and, when I passed through all the absurd ailments to which a child is heir, he sat beside my cot and lulled me to sleep, or told me stories of the war. There was a childlike and simple quality in his own nature, which made me reach out to him and confide in him as I would have done to one of my own age. Later, I scoffed at this virtue in him as something old-fashioned and credulous. That was when I had reached the age when I

was older, I hope, than I shall ever be again. There is no such certainty of knowledge on all subjects as one holds at eighteen and at eighty, and at eighteen I found his care and solicitude irritating and irksome. With the intolerance of youth, I could not see the love that was back of his anxiety, and which should have softened it for me with a halo and made me considerate and grateful. Now I see it—I see it now that it is too late. But surely he understood, he knew how I looked up to him, how I loved him, and how I tried to copy him, and, because I could not, consoled myself inwardly by thinking that the reason I had failed was because his way was the wrong one, and that my way was the better. If he did not understand then, he understands now; I cannot bear to think he does not understand and forgive me.

Those were the best days of my life, the days I spent with him as a child in his own home on the Hudson. It stands at Dobbs Ferry, set in a grove of pines, with a garden about it, and a box hedge that shuts it from the road. The room I best remember is the one that overlooks the Hudson and the Palisades. From its windows you can watch the great vessels passing up and down the river, and the excursion steamers flying many flags, and tiny pleasure-boats and great barges. There is an open fireplace in this room, and in a corner formed by the book-case, and next to the wood-box, was my favorite seat. My grandfather's place was in a great leather chair beside the centre-table, and I used to sit cross-legged on a cushion at his feet, with my back against his knees and my face to the open hearth. I can still see the pages of "Charles O'Malley" and "Midshipman Easy," as I read them by the lifting light of that wood fire, and I can hear the wind roaring down the chimney and among the trees outside, and the steamers signalling to each other as they pushed through the ice and fog to the great city that lay below us. I can feel the fire burning my face, and the cold shivers that ran down my back, as my grandfather told me of the Indians who had once hunted in the very woods back of our house, and of those he had fought with on the plains. With the imagination of a child, I could hear, mingled with the

shrieks of the wind as it dashed the branches against the roof, their hideous war-cries as they rushed to some night attack, or the howling of the wolves in the snow. When I think of myself as I was then I am very fond of that little boy who sat shivering with excitement, and staring with open eyes at the pictures he saw in the firelight, a little boy who had made no enemies, no failures, who had harmed no one, and who knew nothing of the world outside the walls that sheltered him, save the brave old soldier who was his law and his example, his friend in trouble, and his playmate.

I knew nothing then, and I know very little now, either of my father or my mother. Whenever I asked my grandfather concerning them he always answered vaguely that he would tell me some day, "when you are of age," but whether he meant when I was twenty-one or of an age when I was best fitted to hear the truth, I shall never know. But I guessed the truth from what he let fall, and from what I have since heard from others, although that is but little, for I could not ask strangers to tell me of my own people. For some reason, soon after they were married my mother and father separated and she brought me to live with her father, and he entered the Southern army.

I like to think that I can remember my mother, and it seems I must, for very dimly I recollect a young girl who used to sit by the window looking out at the passing vessels. There is a daguerreotype of my mother, and it may be that my recollection of her is builded upon that portrait. She died soon after we came to live with my grandfather, when I was only three years old, but I am sure I remember her, for no other woman was ever in the house, and the figure of the young girl looking out across at the Palisades is very clear to me.

My father was an Irish officer and gentleman, who came to the States to better his fortunes. This was just before the war; and as soon as it began, although he lived in the North, in New York City, he joined the Southern army and was killed. I believe, from what little I have learned of him, that he was both wild and reckless, but the few who remember him all say that he had many noble qualities, and was much loved by men, and, I am afraid, by

women. I do not know more than that, except the one story of him, which my grandfather often told me.

"Whatever a man may say of your father," he would tell me, "you need not believe; for they may not have understood him, and all that you need to remember, until when you are of age I shall tell you the whole truth, is how he died." It is a brief story. My father was occupying a trench which for some hours his company had held under a heavy fire. When the Yankees charged with the bayonet he rose to meet them, but at the same moment the bugle sounded the retreat, and half of his company broke and ran. My father sprang to the top of the trench and called, "Come back, boys, we'll give them one more volley." It may have been that he had misunderstood the call of the bugle, and disobeyed through ignorance, or it may have been that in his education the signal to retreat had been omitted, for he did not heed it, and stood outlined against the sky, looking back and waving his hand to his men. But they did not come to him, and the advancing troop fired, and he fell upon the trench with his body stretched along its length. The Union officer was far in advance of his own company, and when he leaped upon the trench he found that it was empty and that the Confederate troops were in retreat. He turned, and shouted, laughing: "Come on! there's only one man here—and he's dead!"

But my father reached up his hand, to where the officer stood above him, and pulled at his scabbard.

"Not dead, but dying, Captain," my father said. "And that's better than retreating, isn't it?"

"And that is the story," my grandfather used to say to me, "you must remember of your father, and whatever else he did does not count."

At the age of ten my grandfather sent me to a military academy near Dobbs Ferry, where boys were prepared for college and for West Point and Annapolis. I was a very poor scholar, and, with the exception of what I learned in the drill-hall and the gymnasium, the academy did me very little good, and I certainly did not, at that time at least, reflect any credit on the academy. Had I been able to take half

the interest in my studies my grandfather showed in them, I would have won prizes in every branch; but even my desire to please him could not make me understand the simplest problems in long division; and later here at the Point, the higher branches of mathematics, combined with other causes, have nearly deprived the United States Army of a gallant officer. I believe I have it in me to take a piece of field artillery by assault, but I know I shall never be able to work out the formula necessary to adjust its elevation.

With the exception, perhaps, of Cæsar's "Commentaries," I hated all of my studies, not only on their own account, but because they cut me out of the talks with which in the past my grandfather and I had been wont to close each day. These talks, which were made up on my part of demands for more stories, or for repetitions of those I already knew by heart, did more than any other thing to inspire me with a desire for military glory. My grandfather had served through the Mexican War, in the Indian campaigns on the plains, and during the War of the Rebellion, and his memory recalled the most wonderful and exciting of adventures. He was singularly modest, which is a virtue I never could consider as a high one, for I find that the world takes you at your own valuation, and unless "the terrible trumpet of Fame" is sounded by yourself no one else will blow your trumpet for you. Of that you may be sure. But I can't recall ever having heard my grandfather relate to people of his own age any of the adventures which he told me, and once I even caught him recounting a personal experience which redounded greatly to his credit as having happened to "a man in his regiment." When with childish delight I at once accused him of this he was visibly annoyed, and blushed like a girl, and afterward corrected me for being so forward in the presence of my elders. His modesty went even to the length of his keeping hidden in his bedroom the three presentation swords which had been given him at different times for distinguished action on the field. One came from the men of his regiment, one from his townspeople after his return from the City of Mexico, and one from the people of the State of New York; and nothing I could say would in-

duce him to bring them downstairs to our sitting-room, where visitors might see them. Personally, I cannot understand what a presentation sword is for except to show to your friends; for, as a rule, they are very badly balanced and of no use for fighting.

Had it not been for the colored prints of the different battles in Mexico which hung in our sitting-room, and some Indian war-bonnets and bows and arrows, and a box of duelling-pistols, no one would have supposed that our house belonged to one of the most distinguished generals of his day. You may be sure I always pointed these out to our visitors, and one of my chief pleasures was to dress one of my school-mates in the Indian war-bonnet, and then scalp him with a carving-knife. The duelling-pistols were even a greater delight to me. They were equipped with rifle-barrels and hair-triggers, and were inlaid richly with silver, and more than once had been used on the field of honor. Whenever my grandfather went out for a walk, or to play whist at the house of a neighbor, I would get down these pistols and fight duels with myself in front of the looking-glass. With my left hand I would hold the handkerchief above my head, and with the other clutch the pistol at my side, and then, at the word, and as the handkerchief fluttered to the floor, I would take careful aim and pull the trigger. Sometimes I died and made speeches before I expired, and sometimes I killed my adversary and stood smiling down at him.

My grandfather was a member of the Aztec Club, which was organized during the occupation of the City of Mexico by the American officers who had stormed the capital; and on the occasion of one of its annual meetings, which that year was held in Philadelphia, I was permitted to accompany him to that city. It was the longest journey from home I had ever taken, and each incident of it is still clearly fixed in my mind. The event of the reunion was a dinner given at the house of General Patterson, and on the morning before the dinner the members of the club were invited to assemble in the garden which surrounded his house. To this meeting my grandfather conducted me, and I found myself surrounded by the very men of whom he had so often spoken. I was very frightened, and I confess I was surprised

and greatly disappointed also to find that they were old and gray-haired men, and not the young and dashing warriors he had described. General Patterson alone did not disappoint me, for even at that late day he wore a blue coat with brass buttons and a buff waistcoat and high black stock. He had a strong, fine profile and was smooth shaven. I remember I found him exactly my ideal of the Duke of Wellington; for though I was only then ten or twelve years of age, I had my own ideas about every soldier from Alexander and Von Moltke to our own Captain Custer.

It was in the garden behind the Patterson house that we met the General, and he alarmed me very much by pulling my shoulders back and asking me my age, and whether or not I expected to be as brave a soldier as my grandfather, to which latter question I said, "Yes, General," and then could have cried with mortification, for all of the great soldiers laughed at me. One of them turned, and said to the only one who was seated, "That is Hamilton's grandson." The man who was seated did not impress me very much. He was younger than the others. He wore a black suit and a black tie, and the three upper buttons of his waistcoat were unfastened. His beard was close cropped, like a blacking-brush, and he was chewing on a cigar that had burned so far down that I remember wondering why it did not scorch his mustache. And then, as I stood staring up at him and he down at me, it came over me who he was, and I can recall even now how my heart seemed to jump, and I felt terribly frightened and as though I were going to cry. My grandfather bowed to the younger man in the courteous, old-fashioned manner he always observed, and said: "General, this is my grandchild, Captain Macklin's boy. When he grows up I want him to be able to say he has met you. I am going to send him to West Point."

The man in the chair nodded his head at my grandfather, and took his cigar from his mouth and said, "When he's ready to enter, remind me, let me know," and closed his lips again on his cigar, as though he had missed it even during that short space of time. But had he made a long oration neither my grandfather nor I could have been more deeply moved. My grandfather said: "Thank you, General. It is very

kind of you," and led me away smiling so proudly that it was beautiful to see him. When he had entered the house he stopped and bending over me, asked, "Do you know who that was, Roy?" But with the awe of the moment still heavy upon me I could only nod and gasp at him.

"That was General Grant," my grandfather said.

"Yes, I know," I whispered.

I am not particularly proud of the years that preceded my entrance to West Point, and of the years I have spent here I have still less reason to be content. I was an active boy, and behaved as other young cubs of that age, no better and no worse. Dobbs Ferry was not a place where temptations beset one, and, though we were near New York, we were not of it, and we seldom visited it. When we did, it was to go to a *matinée* at some theatre, returning the same afternoon in time for supper. My grandfather was very fond of the drama, and had been acquainted since he was a young man with some of the most distinguished actors. With him I saw Edwin Booth in "Macbeth," and Lester Wallack in "Rosedale," and John McCullough in "Virginius," a tragedy which was to me so real and moving that I wept all the way home in the train. Sometimes I was allowed to visit the theatre alone, and on these afternoons I selected performances of a lighter variety, such as that given by Harrigan and Hart in their theatre on Broadway. Every Thanksgiving Day I was allowed, after witnessing the annual football match between the students from Princeton and Yale universities, to remain in town all that night. On these great occasions I used to visit Koster & Bial's on Twenty-third Street, a long, low building, very dark and very smoky, and which on those nights was blocked with excited mobs of students, wearing different colored ribbons and shouting the cries of their different colleges. I envied and admired these young gentlemen, and thought them very fine fellows indeed. They wore in those days long green coats, which made them look like coachmen, and high, bell-shaped hats, both of which, as I now can see, were a queer survival of the fashions of 1830, and which now for the second time have disappeared.

To me, with my country clothes and manners and scanty spending money, the way these young collegians wagered their money at the football match and drank from their silver flasks, and smoked and swaggered in the hotel corridors, was something to be admired and copied. And although I knew none of them, and would have been ashamed had they seen me in company with any of my boy friends from Dobbs Ferry, I followed them from one hotel to another, pretending I was with them, and even penetrated at their heels into the *café* of Delmonico. I felt then for a brief moment that I was "seeing life," the life of a great metropolis, and in company with the young swells who made it the rushing, delightful whirlpool it appeared to be.

It seemed to me, then, that to wear a green coachman's coat, to rush the door-keeper at the Haymarket dance-hall, and to eat supper at the "Silver Grill" was to be "a man about town," and each year I returned to our fireside at Dobbs Ferry with some discontent. The excursions made me look restlessly forward to the day when I would return from my Western post, a dashing young cavalry officer on leave, and would wake up the *cafés* and clubs of New York, and throw my money about as carelessly as these older boys were doing then.

My appointment to West Point did not, after all, come from General Grant, but from President Arthur, who was in office when I reached my nineteenth year. Had I depended upon my Congressman for the appointment, and had it been made after a competitive examination of candidates, I doubt if I would have been chosen.

Perhaps my grandfather feared this and had it in his mind when he asked the President to appoint me. It was the first favor he had ever asked of the Government he had served so well, and I felt more grateful to him for having asked the favor, knowing what it cost him to do so, than I did to the President for granting it.

I was accordingly entered upon the rolls of the Military Academy, and my career as a soldier began. I wish I could say it began brilliantly, but the records of the Academy would not bear me out. Had it not been that I was forced to study books

I would not have been a bad student ; for in everything but books, in everything that bore directly on the training of a soldier and which depended upon myself, as, for example, drill, riding, marksmanship, and a knowledge of the manual, I did as well, or far better, than any of my classmates. But I could not, or would not, study, and instead of passing high in my class at the end of the plebe year, as my natural talents seemed to promise I would do, I barely scraped through, and the outlook for the second year was not encouraging. The campaign in Mexico had given my grandfather a knowledge of Spanish, and as a boy he had drilled this language into me, for it was a fixed belief of his, that if the United States ever went to war, it would be with some of her Spanish-American neighbors, with Mexico, or Central America, or with Spain on account of Cuba. In consequence he considered it most essential that every United States officer should speak Spanish. He also argued that a knowledge of French was of even greater importance to an officer and a gentleman, as it was, as I have since found it to be, the most widely spoken of all languages. I was accordingly well drilled in these two tongues, and I have never regretted the time I spent on them, for my facility in them has often served me well, has pulled me out of tight places, put money into my pocket, and gained me friends when but for them I might have remained and departed a stranger among strangers. My French accordingly helped me much as a "yearling," and in camp I threw myself so earnestly into the skirmish, artillery, and cavalry drills that in spite of my low marks I still stood high in the opinion of the cadet officers and of my instructors. With my classmates, for some reason, although in all out-of-door exercises I was the superior of most of them, I was not popular. I would not see this at first, for I try to keep on friendly terms with those around me, and I want to be liked even by people of whom I have no very high opinion and from whom I do not want anything besides. But I was not popular. There was no disguising that, and in the gymnasium or the riding-hall other men would win applause for performing a feat of horsemanship or a difficult trick on the parallel bars which same feat, when I re-

peated it immediately after them, and even a little better than they had done it, would be received in silence. I could not see the reason for this, and the fact itself hurt me much more than anyone guessed. Then as they would not signify by their approbation that I was the best athlete in the class, I took to telling them that I was, which did not help matters. I find it is the same in the world as it is at the Academy—that if one wants recognition, he must pretend not to see that he deserves it. If he shows he does see it, everyone else will grow blind, holding, I suppose, that a conceited man carries his own comfort with him, and is his own reward. I soon saw that the cadet who was modest received more praise than the cadet who was his superior, but who, through repeated success, had acquired a self-confident, or, as some people call it, a conceited manner ; and so, for a time, I pretended to be modest, too, and I never spoke of my athletic successes. But I was never very good at pretending, and soon gave it up. Then I grew morbid over my inability to make friends, and moped by myself, having as little to do with my classmates as possible. In my loneliness I began to think that I was a much misunderstood individual. My solitary state bred in me a most unhealthy disgust for myself, and, as it always is with those who are at times exuberantly light-hearted and self-assertive, I had terrible fits of depression and lack of self-confidence, during which spells I hated myself and all of those about me. Once, during one of these moods, a First-Class man, who had been a sneak in his plebe year and a bully ever since, asked me, sneeringly, how "Napoleon on the Isle of St. Helena" was feeling that morning, and I told him promptly to go to the devil, and added that if he addressed me again, except in the line of his duty, I would thrash him until he could not stand or see. Of course he sent me his second, and one of my classmates acted for me. We went out that same evening after supper behind Fort Clinton, and I thrashed him so badly that he was laid up in the hospital for several days. After that I took a much more cheerful view of life, and as it seemed hardly fair to make one cadet bear the whole brunt of my displeasure toward the entire battalion, I began picking quarrels with anyone who made pretensions of being

a fighter, and who chanced to be bigger than myself.

Sometimes I got badly beaten, and sometimes I thrashed the other man, but whichever way it went, those battles in the soft twilight evenings behind the grass-grown ramparts of the old fort, in the shadow of the Kosciusko Monument, will always be the brightest and pleasantest memories of my life at this place.

My grandfather had one other daughter besides my mother, my Aunt Mary, who had married a Harvard professor, Dr. Endicott, and who had lived in Cambridge ever since they married.

In my second year here, Dr. Endicott died and my grandfather at once went to Cambridge to bring Aunt Mary and her daughter Beatrice back with him, installing them in our little home, which thereafter was to be theirs as well. He wrote me saying he knew I would not disapprove of this invasion of my place by my young cousin and assured me that no one, girl or boy, could ever take the place in his heart that I had held. As a matter of fact I was secretly pleased to hear of this addition to our little household. I knew that as soon as I was graduated I would be sent to some army post in the West, and that the occasional visit I was now able to pay to Dobbs Ferry would be discontinued. I hated to think that in his old age my grandfather would be quite alone. On the other hand, when, after the arrival of my cousin, I received his first letter and found it filled with enthusiastic descriptions of her, and of how anxious she was to make him happy, I felt a little thrill of jealousy. It gave me some sharp pangs of remorse, and I asked myself searchingly if I had always done my utmost to please my grandfather and to give him pride and pleasure in me. I determined for the future I would think only of how to make him happy.

A few weeks later I was able to obtain a few hours' leave, and I wasted no time in running down from the Point to make the acquaintance of my cousin, and to see how the home looked under the new régime. I found it changed, and, except that I felt then and afterward that I was a guest, it was changed for the better.

I found that my grandfather was much more comfortable in every way. The newcomers were both eager and loving, al-

though no one could help but love my grandfather, and they invented wants he had never felt before, and satisfied them, while at the same time they did not interfere with the life he had formerly led. Aunt Mary is an unselfish soul, and most content when she is by herself engaged in the affairs of the house and in doing something for those who live in it. Besides her unselfishness, which is to me the highest as it is the rarest of virtues, hers is a sweet and noble character, and she is one of the gentlest souls that I have ever known.

I may say the same of my cousin Beatrice. When she came into the room, my first thought was how like she was to a statuette of a Dresden shepherdess which had always stood at one end of our mantel-piece, coquetting with the shepherd lad on the other side of the clock. As a boy, the shepherdess had been my ideal of feminine loveliness. Since then my ideals had changed rapidly and often, but Beatrice reminded me that the shepherdess had once been my ideal. She wore a broad straw hat, with artificial roses which made it hang down on one side, and, as she had been working in our garden, she wore huge gloves and carried a trowel in one hand. As she entered, my grandfather rose hastily from his chair and presented us with impressive courtesy. "Royal," he said, "this is your cousin, Beatrice Endicott." If he had not been present, I think we would have shaken hands without restraint. But he made our meeting something of a ceremony. I brought my heels together and bowed as I have been taught to do at the Academy, and seeing this she made a low courtesy. She did this apparently with great gravity, but as she kept her eyes on mine I saw that she was mocking me. If I am afraid of anything it has certainly never proved to be a girl, but I confess I was strangely embarrassed. My cousin seemed somehow different from any of the other girls I had met. She was not at all like those with whom I had danced at the hotel hops, and to whom I gave my brass buttons in Flirtation Walk. She was more fine, more illusive, and yet most fascinating, with a quaint old-fashioned manner that at times made her seem quite a child, and the next moment changed her into a worldly and charming young woman.

She made you feel she was much older than yourself in years and in experience and in knowledge. That is the way my cousin appeared to me the first time I saw her, when she stood in the middle of the room courtesying mockingly at me and looking like a picture on an old French fan. That is how she has since always seemed to me—one moment a woman, and the next a child; one moment tender and kind and merry, and the next disapproving, distant, and unapproachable.

Up to the time I met Beatrice I had never thought it possible to consider a girl as a friend. For the matter of that, I had no friends even among men, and I made love to girls. My attitude toward girls, if one can say that a man of eighteen has an attitude, was always that of the devoted admirer. If they did not want me as a devoted admirer, I put them down as being proud and haughty or “stuck up.” It never occurred to me then that there might be a class of girl who, on meeting you, did not desire that you should at once tell her exactly how you loved her, and why. The girls who came to Cranston’s certainly seemed to expect you to set their minds at rest on that subject, and my point of view of girls was taken entirely from them. I can remember very well my pause of dawning doubt and surprise when a girl first informed me she thought a man who told her she was pretty was impertinent. What bewildered me still more on that occasion was that this particular girl was so extremely beautiful that to talk about anything else but her beauty was a waste of time. It made all other topics trivial, and yet she seemed quite sincere in what she said, and refused to allow me to bring our talk to the personal basis of “what I am to you” and “what you are to me.” It was in discussing that question that I considered myself an artist and a master. My classmates agreed with me in thinking as I did, and from the first moment I came here called me “Masher” Macklin, a sobriquet of which I fear for a time I was rather proud. Certainly, I strove to live up to it. I believe I dignified my conduct to myself by calling it “flirtation.” Flirtation, as I understood it, was a sort of game in which I honestly believed the entire world of men and women, of every class

and age, were eagerly engaged. Indeed, I would have thought it rather ungallant, and conduct unworthy of an officer and a gentleman, had I not at once pretended to hold an ardent interest in every girl I met. This seems strange now, but from the age of fourteen up to the age of twenty that was my way of regarding the girls I met, and even to-day I fear my attitude toward them has altered but slightly, for now, although I no longer pretend to care when I do not, nor make love as a matter of course, I find it is the easiest attitude to assume toward most women. It is the simplest to slip into, just as I have certainly found it the one from which it is most difficult to escape. But I never seem to remember that until it is too late. A classmate of mine once said to me: “Royal, you remind me of a man walking along a road with garden gates opening on each side of it. Instead of keeping to the road, you stop at every gate, and say: ‘Oh! what a pretty garden! I’ll just slip in there, and find out where that path will take me.’ And then—you’re either thrown out, and the gate slammed after you, or you lose yourself in a maze and you can’t get out—until you break out. But does that ever teach you a lesson? No! Instead of going ahead along the straight and narrow way, and keeping out of temptation, you halt at the very next gate you come to, just as though you had never seen a gate before, and exclaim: ‘Now, this is a pretty garden, and *what* a neat white fence! I really must vault in and take a look round.’ And so the whole thing is gone over again.”

I confess there may be some truth in what he said, but the trouble I find with the straight and narrow way is that there’s not room enough in it for two. And, then, it is only fair to me to say that some of the gardens were really most beautiful, and the shade very deep and sweet there, and the memories of the minutes I passed in them were very refreshing when I went back to the dust of the empty road. And no one, man or woman, can say that Royal Macklin ever trampled on the flowers, or broke the branches, or trespassed in another man’s private grounds.

It was my cousin Beatrice who was responsible for the change of heart in me

toward womankind. For very soon after she came to live with us, I noticed that in regard to all other young women I was growing daily more exacting. I did not admit this to myself, and still less to Beatrice, because she was most scornful of the girls I knew, and mocked at them. This was quite unfair of her, because she had no real acquaintance with them, and knew them only from photographs and tintypes, of which I had a most remarkable collection, and of what I chose to tell her about them. I was a good deal annoyed to find that the stories which appealed to me as best illustrating the character of each of my friends, only seemed to furnish Beatrice with fresh material for ridicule, and the girls of whom I said the least were the ones of whom she approved. The only girls of my acquaintance who also were friends of hers, were two sisters who lived at Dobbs Ferry, and whose father owned the greater part of it, and a yacht, in which he went down to his office every morning. But Beatrice held that my manner even to them was much too free and familiar, and that she could not understand why I did not see that it was annoying to them as well. I could not tell her in my own defence that their manner to me, when she was with us and when she was not, varied in a remarkable degree. It was not only girls who carried themselves differently before Beatrice: every man who met her seemed to try and show her the best in him, or at least to suppress any thought or act which might displease her. It was not that she was a prig, or an angel, but she herself was so fine and sincere, and treated all with such an impersonal and yet gracious manner that it became contagious, and everybody who met her imitated the model she unconsciously furnished. I was very much struck with this when she visited the Academy. Men who before her coming had seemed bold enough for any game, became dumb and embarrassed in her presence, and eventually it was the officers and instructors who escorted her over the grounds, while I and my acquaintances among the cadets formed a straggling rear-guard at her heels. On account of my grandfather, both she and my aunt were made much of by the Commandant and all the older officers, and when they

continued to visit the Academy they were honored and welcomed for themselves, and I found that on such occasions my own popularity was enormously increased. I have always been susceptible to the opinion of others. Even when the reigning belle or the popular man of the class was not to me personally attractive, the fact that she was the reigning belle and that he was the man of the hour made me seek out the society of each. This was even so, when, as a matter of fact, I should have much preferred to dance with some less conspicuous beauty or talk with a more congenial companion. Consequently I began to value my cousin, whom I already regarded with the most tremendous admiration, for those lighter qualities which are common to all attractive girls, but which in my awe of her I had failed to recognize. There were many times, even, when I took myself by the shoulders and faced the question if I were not in love with Beatrice. I mean truly in love, with that sort of love that one does not talk about, even to one's self, certainly not to the girl. As the young man of the family, I had assumed the position of the heir of the house, and treated Beatrice like a younger sister, but secretly I considered her in no such light.

Many nights when on post I would halt to think of her, and of her loveliness and high sincerity, and forget my duty while I stood with my arms crossed on the muzzle of my gun. In such moments the night, the silence, the moonlight piercing the summer leaves and falling at my feet, made me forget my promise to myself that I would never marry. I used to imagine then it was not the unlicked cubs under the distant tents I was protecting, but that I was awake to watch over and guard Beatrice, or that I was a knight, standing his vigil so that he might be worthy to wear the Red Cross and enter her service. In those lonely watches I saw littlenesses and meannesses in myself, which I could not see in the brisk light of day, and my self-confidence slipped from me and left me naked and abashed. I saw myself as a vain, swaggering boy, who, if he ever hoped to be a man among men, such as Beatrice was a woman above all other women, must change his nature at once and forever.

I was glad that I owed these good resolutions to her. I was glad that it was she who inspired them. Those nights, as I leaned on my gun, I dreamed even that it might end happily and beautifully in our marriage. I wondered if I could make her care, if I could ever be worthy of her, and I vowed hotly that I would love her as no other woman was ever loved.

And then I would feel the cold barrel of my musket pressing against the palm of my hand, or the bayonet would touch my cheek, and at the touch something would tighten in my throat, and I would shake the thoughts from me and remember that I was sworn to love only my country and my country's flag.

In my third year here my grandfather died. As the winter closed in he had daily grown more feeble, and sat hour after hour in his great arm-chair, dozing and dreaming, before the open fire. And one morning when he was alone in the room, Death, which had so often taken the man at his side, and stood at salute to let him live until his work was done, came to him and touched him gently. A few days later when his body passed through the streets of our little village, all the townspeople left their houses and shops, and stood in silent rows along the sidewalks, with their heads uncovered to the falling snow. Soldiers of his old regiments, now busy men of affairs in the great city below us, came to march behind him for the last time. Officers of the Loyal Legion, veterans of the Mexican War, regulars from Governor's Island, with their guns reversed, societies, political clubs, and strangers who knew him only by what he had done for his country, followed in the long procession as it wound its way through the cold, gray winter day to the side of the open grave. Until then I had not fully understood what it meant to me, for my head had been numbed and dulled; but as the body disappeared into the grave, and the slow notes of the bugle rose in the final call of "Lights out," I put my head on my aunt's shoulder and cried like a child. And I felt as though I were a child again, as I did when he came and sat beside my bed, and heard me say my prayers, and then closed the door behind him, leaving me in the darkness and alone.

But I was not entirely alone, for Beatrice was true and understanding; putting her own grief out of sight, caring for mine, and giving it the first place in her thoughts. For the next two days we walked for hours through the autumn woods where the dead leaves rustled beneath our feet, thinking and talking of him. Or for hours we would sit in silence, until the sun sank a golden red behind the wall of the Palisades, and we went back through the cold night to the open fireside and his empty chair.

ST. CHARLES HOTEL,
NEW ORLEANS.

Six months ago had anyone told me that the day would come when I would feel thankful for the loss of my grandfather, I would have struck him. But for the last week I have been almost thankful that he is dead. The worst that could occur has happened. I am in bitter disgrace, and I am grateful that grandfather died before it came upon me. I have been dismissed from the Academy. The last of the "Fighting" Macklins has been declared unfit to hold the President's commission. I am cast out irrevocably; there is no appeal against the decision. I shall never change the gray for the blue. I shall never see the U. S. on my saddle-cloth, nor salute my country's flag as it comes fluttering down at sunset.

That I am on my way to try and redeem myself is only an attempt to patch up the broken pieces. The fact remains that the army has no use for me. I have been dismissed from West Point, in disgrace. It was a girl who brought it about, or rather my own foolishness over a girl. And before that there was much that led up to it. It is hard to write about it, but in these memoirs I mean to tell everything—the good, with the bad. And as I deserve no excuse, I make none.

During that winter, after the death of my grandfather, and the spring which has followed, I tried hard to do well at the Point. I wanted to show them that though my grandfather was gone, his example and his wishes still inspired me. And though I was not a studious cadet, I was a smart soldier, and my demerits, when they came, were for smoking in my room or for breaking some other such silly rule, and never

for slouching through the manual or coming on parade with my belts twisted. And at the end of the second year I had been promoted from corporal to be a cadet first sergeant, so that I was fourth in command over a company of seventy. Although this gave me the advantage of a light after "taps" until eleven o'clock, my day was so taken up with roll-calls, riding and evening drills and parade, that I never seemed to find time to cram my mechanics and chemistry, of which latter I could never see any possible benefit. How a knowledge of what acid will turn blue litmus-paper red is going to help an officer to find fodder for his troop horses, or inspire him to lead a forlorn hope, was then, and still is, beyond my youthful comprehension.

But these studies were down on the roster, and whether I thought well of them or not I was marked on them and judged accordingly. But I cannot claim that it was owing to them or my failure to understand them that my dismissal came, for, in spite of the absence of 3's in my markings and the abundance of 2's, I was still a soldierly cadet, and in spite of the fact that I was a stupid student, I made an excellent drill-master.

The trouble, when it came, was all my own making, and my dismissal was entirely due to an act of silly recklessness and my own idiocy. I had taken chances before and had not been caught; several times I ran the sentries at night for the sake of a noisy, drunken spree at a roadside tavern, and several times I had risked my chevrons because I did not choose to respect the arbitrary rules of the Academy which chafed my spirit and invited me to rebellion. It was not so much that I enjoyed those short hours of freedom, which I snatched in the face of such serious penalties, but it was the risk of the thing itself which attracted me, and which stirred the spirit of adventure that at times sways us all.

It was a girl who brought about my dismissal. I do not mean that she was in any way to blame, but she was the indirect cause of my leaving the Academy. It was a piece of fool's fortune, and I had not even the knowledge that I cared in the least for the girl to console me. She was only one of the several "piazza girls," as we called certain ones of those who

were staying at Cranston's, with whom I had danced, to whom I had made pretty speeches, and had given the bell button that was sewn just over my heart. She certainly was not the best of them, for I can see now that she was vain and shallow, with a pert boldness, which I mistook for vivacity and wit. Three years ago, at the age of twenty, my knowledge of women was so complete that I divided them into six classes, and as soon as I met a new one I placed her in one of these classes and treated her according to the line of campaign I had laid down as proper for that class. Now, at twenty-three, I believe that there are as many different kinds of women as there are women, but that all kinds are good. Some women are better than others, but all are good, and all are different. This particular one unknowingly did me a great harm, but others have given me so much that is for good, that the balance side is in their favor. If a man is going to make a fool of himself, I personally would rather see him do it on account of a woman than for any other cause. For centuries Antony has been held up to the scorn of the world because he deserted his troops and his fleet, and sacrificed the Roman Empire for the sake of Cleopatra. Of course, that is the one thing a man cannot do, desert his men and betray his flag; but, if he is going to make a bad break in life, I rather like his doing it for the love of a woman. And, after all, it is rather fine to have for once felt something in you so great that you placed it higher than the Roman Empire.

I haven't the excuse of any great feeling in my case. She, the girl at Cranston's, was leaving the Point on the morrow, and she said if all I had sworn to her was true I would run the sentries that night to dance with her at the hop. Of course, love does not set tests nor ask sacrifices, but I had sworn that I had loved her, as I understood the word, and I told her I would come. I came, and I was recognized as I crossed the piazza to the ball-room. On the morning following I was called to the office of the Commandant and was told to pack my trunk. I was out of uniform in an hour, and that night at parade the order of the War Department dismissing me from the service was read to the assembled battalion.

I cannot write about that day. It was

a very bright, beautiful day, full of life and sunshine, and I remember that I wondered how the world could be so cruel and unfeeling. The other second-classmen came in while I was packing my things, to say that they were sorry. They were kind enough; and some of them wanted me to go off to New York to friends of theirs and help upset it and get drunk. Their idea was, I suppose, to show the authorities how mistaken they had been in not making me an officer. But I could not be civil to any of them. I hated them all, and the place, and everyone in it. When I was dismissed my first thought was one of utter thankfulness that my grandfather died before the disgrace came upon me, and after that I did not much care. I was desperate and bitterly miserable. I knew, as the authorities could not know, that no one in my class felt more loyal to the service than myself; that I would have died twenty deaths for my country; that there was no one company post in the West, however distant from civilization, that would not have been a paradise to me; that there was no soldier in the army who would have served more devotedly than myself. And now I was found wanting and thrown out to herd with civilians, as unfit to hold the President's commission. After my first outbreak of impotent rage—for I blamed everyone but myself—remorse set in, and I thought of grandfather and of how much he had done for our country, and how we had talked so confidently together of the days when I would follow in his footsteps, as his grandchild, and as the son of "Fighting Macklin."

All my life I had talked and thought of nothing else, and now, just as I was within a year of it, I was shown the door which I never can enter again.

That it might be easier for us when I arrived, I telegraphed Beatrice what had happened, and when I reached the house the same afternoon she was waiting for me at the door, as though I was coming home for a holiday and it was all as it might have been. But neither of us was deceived, and without a word we walked out of the garden and up the hill to the woods where we had last been together six months before. Since then all had changed. Summer had come, the trees were heavy with leaves, and a warm haze hung over the

river and the Palisades beyond. We seated ourselves on a fallen tree at the top of the hill and sat in silence, looking down into the warm, beautiful valley. It was Beatrice who was the first to speak.

"I have been thinking of what you can do," she began, gently, "and it seems to me, Royal, that what you need now is a good rest. It has been a hard winter for you. You have had to meet the two greatest trials that I hope will ever come to you. You took the first one well, as you should, and you will take this lesser one well also; I know you will. But you must give yourself time to get over this—this disappointment, and to look about you. You must try to content yourself at home with mother and with me. I am so selfish that I am almost glad it has happened, for now for a time we shall have you with us, all to ourselves, and we can take care of you and see that you are not gloomy and morbid. And then when the fall comes you will have decided what is best to do, and you will have a rest and a quiet summer with those who understand you and love you. And then you can go out into the world to do your work, whatever your work is to be."

I turned toward her and stared at her curiously.

"Whatever my work is to be," I repeated. "That was decided for me, Beatrice, when I was a little boy."

She returned my look for a moment in some doubt, and then leaned eagerly forward. "You mean to enlist?" she asked.

"To enlist? Not I!" I answered hotly. "If I'm not fit to be an officer now, I never shall be, at least not by that road. Do you know what it means? It's the bitterest life a man can follow. He is neither the one thing nor the other. The enlisted men suspect him, and the officers may not speak with him. I know one officer who got his commission that way. He swears now he would rather have served the time in jail. The officers at the post pointed him out to visitors, as the man who had failed at West Point, and who was working his way up from the ranks, and the men of his company thought that *he* thought, God help him, that he was too good for them, and made his life hell. Do you suppose I'd show my musket to men of my old mess, and have the girls I've danced

with see me marching up and down a board walk with a gun on my shoulder? Do you see me going on errands for the men I've hazed, and showing them my socks and shirts at inspection so they can give me a good mark for being a clean and tidy soldier? No! I'll not enlist. If I'm not good enough to carry a sword I'm not good enough to carry a gun, and the United States Army can struggle along without me."

Beatrice shook her head.

"Don't say anything you'll be sorry for, Royal," she warned me.

"You don't understand," I interrupted. "I'm not saying anything against my own country or our army—how can I? I've proved clearly enough that I'm not fit for it. I'm only too grateful. I've had three years in the best military school in the world, at my country's expense, and I'm grateful. Yes, and I'm miserable, too, that I have failed to deserve it."

I stood up and straightened my shoulders. "But perhaps there are other countries less difficult to please," I said, "where I can lose myself and be forgotten, and where I can see service. After all, a soldier's business is to fight, not to sit at a post all day or to do a clerk's work at Washington."

Even as I spoke these chance words I seemed to feel the cloud of failure and disgrace passing from me. I saw vaguely a way to redeem myself, and, though I had spoken with bravado and at random, the words stuck in my mind, and my despondency fell from me like a heavy knapsack.

"Come," I said, cheerfully, "there can be no talk of a holiday for me until I have earned it. You know I would love to stay here now with you and Aunt in the old house, but I have no time to mope and be petted. If you fall down, you must not lie in the road and cry over your bruised shins; you must pick yourself up and go on again, even if you are a bit sore and dirty."

We said nothing more, but my mind was made up, and when we reached the house I went at once to my room and repacked my trunk for a long journey. It was a leather trunk in which my grandfather used to carry his sword and uniform, and in it I now proudly placed the presentation sword he had bequeathed to me in his will, and my scanty wardrobe and \$500 of the

money he had left to me. All the rest of his fortune, with the exception of the \$2,000 a year he had settled upon me, he had, I am glad to say, bequeathed with the house to Aunt Mary and Beatrice. When I had finished my packing I joined them at supper, and such was my elation at the prospect of at once setting forth to redeem myself, and to seek my fortune, that to me the meal passed most cheerfully. When it was finished, I found the paper of that morning, and spreading it out upon the table began a careful search in the foreign news for what tidings there might be of war.

I told Beatrice what I was doing, and without a word she brought out my old school atlas, and together under the light of the student-lamp we sought out the places mentioned in the foreign despatches, and discussed them, and the chances they might offer me.

There were, I remember, at the time that paper was printed, strained relations existing between France and China over the copper mines in Tonkin; there was a tribal war in Upper Burmah with native troops; there was a threat of complications in the Balkans, but the Balkans, as I have since learned, are always with us and always threatening. Nothing in the paper seemed to offer me the chance I sought, and apparently peace smiled on every other portion of the globe.

"There is always the mounted police in Canada," I said, tentatively.

"No," Beatrice answered, quietly, and without asking her reasons I accepted her decision and turned again to the paper. And then my eyes fell on a paragraph which at first I had overlooked—a modest, brief despatch tucked away in a corner, and unremarkable, except for its strange date-line. It was headed, "The Revolt in Honduras." I pointed to it with my finger, and Beatrice leaned forward with her head close to mine, and we read it together.

"Tegucigalpa, June 17th," it read. "The revolution here has assumed serious proportions. President Alvarez has proclaimed martial law over all provinces, and leaves to-morrow for Santa Barbara, where the Liberal forces under the rebel leader, ex-President Louis Garcia, were last in camp. General Laguerre is coming from Nicaragua to assist Garcia with his for-

eign legion of 200 men. He has seized the Nancy Miller, belonging to the Isthmian Line, and has fitted her with two Gatling guns. He is reported to be bombarding the towns on his way along the coast, and a detachment of Government troops is marching to Porto Cortez to prevent his landing. His force is chiefly composed of American and other aliens, who believe the overthrow of the present government will be beneficial to foreign residents.

"General Laguerre!" I cried, eagerly, "that is not a Spanish name. General Laguerre must be a Frenchman. And it says that the men with him are Americans, and that the present government is against all foreigners."

I drew back from the table with a laugh, and stood smiling at Beatrice, but she shook her head, even though she smiled, too.

"Oh, not that," she said.

"My dear Beatrice," I expostulated, "it certainly isn't right that American interests in—what's the name of the place—in Honduras, should be jeopardized, is it? And by an ignorant half-breed like this President What's-his-name? Certainly not. It must be stopped, even if we have to requisition every steamer the Isthmian Line has afloat."

"Oh, Royal," Beatrice cried, "you are not serious. No, you wouldn't, you couldn't be so foolish. That's no affair of yours. That's not your country. Besides, that is not war; it is speculation. You are a gentleman, not a pirate and a filibuster."

"William Walker was a filibuster," I answered. "He took Nicaragua with 200 men and held it for two years against 20,000. I must begin somewhere," I cried, "why not there?" A girl can't understand these things—at least, some girls can't—but I would have thought you would. What does it matter what I do or where I go?" I broke out, bitterly. "I have made a failure of my life at the very start. I am sick and sore and desperate. I don't care where I go or what——"

I would have ranted on for some time, no doubt, but that a look from Beatrice stopped me in mid-air, and I stood silent, feeling somewhat foolish.

"I can understand this much," she said, "that you are a foolish boy. How

dare you talk of having made a failure of your life? Your life has not yet begun. You have yet to make it, and to show yourself something more than a boy." She paused, and then her manner changed, and her came toward me, looking up at me with eyes that were moist and softened with a sweet and troubled tenderness, and she took my hand and held it close in both of hers.

I had never seen her look more beautiful than she did at that moment. If it had been any other woman in the world but her, I would have caught her in my arms and kissed her again and again, but because it was she I could not touch her, but drew back and looked down into her eyes with the sudden great feeling I had for her. And so we stood for a moment, seeing each other as we had never seen each other before. And then she caught her breath quickly and drew away. But she turned her face toward me at once, and looked up at me steadily.

"I am so fond of you, Royal," she said, bravely, "you know, that—that I cannot bear to think of you doing anything in this world that is not fine and for the best. But if you will be a knight errant, and seek out dangers and fight windmills, promise me to be a true knight and that you will fight only when you must and only on the side that is just, and then you will come back bringing your sheaves with you."

I did not dare to look at her, but I raised her hand and held the tips of her fingers against my lips, and I promised, but I would have promised anything at that moment.

"If I am to be a knight," I said, and my voice sounded very hoarse and boyish, so that I hardly recognized it as my own, "you must give me your colors to wear on my lance, and if any other knight thinks his colors fairer, or the lady who gave them more lovely than you, I shall kill him."

She laughed softly and moved away.

"Of course," she said, "of course, you must kill him." She stepped a few feet from me, and, raising her hands to her throat, unfastened a little gold chain which she wore around her neck. She took it off and held it toward me. "Would you like this?" she said. I did not answer,

nor did she wait for me to do so, but wound the chain around my wrist and fastened it, and I raised it and kissed it, and neither of us spoke. She went out to the veranda to warn her mother of my departure, and I to tell the servants to bring the carriage to the door.

A few minutes later, the suburban train drew out of the station at Dobbs Ferry, and I waved my hand to Beatrice as she sat in the carriage looking after me. The night was warm and she wore a white dress and her head was uncovered. In the smoky glare of the station lamps I could still see the soft tints of her hair; and as the train bumped itself together and pulled forward, I felt a sudden panic of doubt, a piercing stab at my heart, and something called on me to leap off the car that was bearing me away, and go back to the white figure sitting motionless in the carriage. As I gripped the iron railing to restrain myself, I felt the cold sweat springing to the palm of my hand. For a moment I forgot the end of my long journey. I saw it as something foolish, mad, fantastic. I was snatching at a flash of powder, when I could warm my hands at an open fire. I was deserting the one thing which counted and of which I was certain; the one thing I loved. And then the train turned a curve, the lamps of the station and the white ghostly figure were shut from me, and I entered the glaring car filled with close air and smoke and smelling lamps. I seated myself beside a window and leaned far out into the night, so that the wind of the rushing train beat in my face.

And in a little time the clanking car-wheels seemed to speak to me, beating out the words brazenly so that I thought everyone in the car must hear them.

"Turn again, turn again, Royal Macklin," they seemed to say to me. "She loves you, Royal Macklin, she loves you, she loves you."

And I thought of Dick Whittington when the Bow bells called to him, as he paused in the country lane to look back at the smoky roof of London, and they had offered him so little, while for me the words seemed to promise the proudest place a man could hold. And I imagined myself still at home, working by day in some New York office and coming

back by night to find Beatrice at the station waiting for me, always in a white dress, and with her brown hair glowing in the light of the lamps. And I pictured us taking long walks together above the Hudson, and quiet, happy evenings by the fireside. But the rhythm of the car-wheels altered, and from "She loves you, she loves you," the refrain now came brokenly and fiercely, like the reports of muskets fired in hate and fear, and mixed with their roar and rattle I seemed to distinguish words of command in a foreign tongue, and the groans of men wounded and dying. And I saw, rising above great jungles and noisome swamps, a long mountain-range piercing a burning, naked sky; and in a pass in the mountains a group of my own countrymen, ragged and worn and with eyes lit with fever, waving a strange flag, and beset on every side by dark-faced soldiers, and I saw my own face among them, hollow-cheeked and tanned, with my head bandaged in a scarf; I felt the hot barrel of a rifle burning my palm, I smelt the pungent odor of spent powder, my throat and nostrils were assailed with smoke. I suffered all the fierce joy and agony of battle, and the picture of the white figure of Beatrice grew dim and receded from me, and as it faded the eyes regarded me wistfully and reproached me, but I would not heed then, but turned my own eyes away. And again I saw the menacing negro faces and the burning sunlight and the strange flag that tossed and whimpered in the air above my head, the strange flag of unknown, tawdry colors, like the painted face of a woman in the street, but a flag at which I cheered and shouted as though it were my own, as though I loved it; a flag for which I would fight and die.

The train twisted its length into the great station, the men about me rose and crowded down the aisle, and I heard the cries of newsboys and hackmen and jangling car-bells, and all the roar and tumult of a great city at night.

But I had already made my choice. Within an hour I had crossed to the Jersey side, and was speeding south, south toward New Orleans, toward the Gulf of Mexico, toward Honduras, to Colonel Laguerre and his foreign legion.

(To be continued.)

THE SHERIFF'S BLUFF

By Thomas Nelson Page

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. C. RANSOM

THE county of H—— was an old Colonial county, and contained many old Colonial relics even as late as the time of my story. Among them were the court-house and the jail, and, at that time, the Judge and the Sheriff.

The court-house was an old brick edifice of solemn and grayish brown, with a portico whose mighty columns might have stood before a temple of Minerva overlooking the Ægean Sea. With its thick walls and massive-barred windows, it might have been thought the jail, until one saw the jail. The jail once seen stood alone. A cube of stone, each block huge enough to have come from the Pyramid of Cheops, the windows, or rather the apertures, were small square openings, crossed and re-crossed with great bars of wrought iron, so massive that they might have been fashioned on the forge of Cyclops. Looking through them from the outside, one saw just deep enough into the narrow cavern to see another iron grating, and catch a suspicion of the darkness beyond. The door was but a slit letting into a stone-paved corridor on which opened the grinding iron doors of the four small cells, each door a grate of huge iron bars, heavily crossed, with openings just large enough to admit a hand. The jail was built, not to meet the sentimental or any other requirements of a reasonable and humane age, but in that hard time when crime was reckoned crime, when the very names of "gaol" and "prison" stood for something clear and unmistakable.

The Judge of the circuit was himself a relic of the past, for his youth had been cast among those great ones of the earth whose memory had come down coupled with deeds so heroic and far-reaching, that even to the next generation their doers appeared half enveloped in the halo of tradition, and stood rather as historical personages than as real men. His life had been one of great rectitude and dignity,

while habits of unusual studiousness and a work on great Executors had added a reputation of vast learning, and in his old age both in his manner and his habit he preserved a distance and a dignity of demeanor which lent dignity to the bar, and surrounded him wherever he went with a feeling akin to awe. Though he had given up the queue and short clothes, he still retained ruffles, or what was so close akin to them that the difference could scarcely be discerned. Tall, grave, and with a little bend, not in the shoulders but in the neck; with white hair just long enough to be brushed behind in a way to suggest the knot which once appeared at the back; with calm, quiet eyes under bushy white eyebrows; a face of pinkish red inherited from Saxon ancestors, who once lived in the sun and on the brine, and a mouth and chin which bespoke decision and self-respect in every line and wrinkle, wherever he moved he produced an impression of one who had survived from a preceding age. Moreover, he was a man of heroic ideals, of Spartan simplicity, and of inflexible discipline.

If he had a weakness it was his susceptibility to feminine testimony.

The county was a secluded one—a fitting field for such a judge. And the great meetings of the year were the sessions of the Circuit Court.

The Judge's name was then on every lip, and his passage to the court-house was a procession. Everyone except those unfortunates who had come under his ban, or might be too far gone with drink to venture into his presence, drew up along the path from the tavern to bow to him and receive his courteous bow in return as he passed with slow and thoughtful step along, preceded by the Sheriff and his deputies, and followed by the bar and "the multitude." Whenever he entered the court or rose from the bench the lawyers stood.

If he was impressive off the bench, on the bench he was imposing.

At heart one of the kindest of men, he