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A little girl knelt sobbing and terrified. Down in the valley south of the post a broad glare was already shooting upward and illuminating the sky. among a dozen little shanties and log houses, the homes of the laundresses of the garrison and collectively known as sville, was a mass of flames. There was a rush of officers across the parade, and the men, answering the alarum of the trumpet and the shots and shouts of the sentries, came tearing from their quarters and plunging down the hill. Among the first on the spot came the young men who were of the party at Capt. Rayner's, and Mr. Graham was ahead of them all. It was plain to the most inexperienced eye that there was hardly anything left to save in or about the burning shanty. All efforts must be directed towards preventing the spread of the flames to those adjoining. Half alad women and children were rushing about, shricking with fright and excite ment, and a few men were engaged in dragging household goods and furniture from those tenements not yet reached by he flames. Fire apparatus there seeme to be none, though squads of men speed-ily appeared with ladders, axes and buckets, brought from the different company quarters, and the arriving officers quickly formed the bucket lines, and dipped from the icy creek began to fly from hand to hand. Before any thing like this was fairly under way, a scene of semi-tragic, semi-comic intencity had been enacted in the presence of rapidly gathering audience. "It was worth more than the price of admission o hear Blake tell it afterwards," said the officers, later. A tall, angular woman, frantic with

nent and terror, was dancing about n the broad glare of the burning hut, ring her hair, making wild rushes at the flames from time to time as though intent on dragging out some prized ob-ject that was being consumed before her eyes, and all the time keeping up a vol-ley of maledictions and abuse in lavish rnian, apparently directed at a coworing object who sat in limp helplessness a little neap of firewood, swaying om side to side and moaning stupidly through the scorched and grimy hands in which his face was hidden. His clothand beard were singed to the roots; he was evidently seriously injured, and the sympathizing soldiers who had gathered and him after deluging him with snow and water were striving to get him to arise and go with them to the hospital. A little girl, not ten years old, knelt sobbing and terrified by his side. She, too, was scorched and singed, and the soldiers had thrown rough blankets about her; but it was for her father, not herelf, she seemed worried to distraction me of the women were striving to retashion, bidding her cheer up—the father was only stupid from drink, and would be all right as soon as "the liquor was off of him." But the little one was beyond consolation so long as he could not would not speak in answer to her en-

All this fime, never pausing for breath, shricking anathemas on her drunken epouse, reproaches on her frightened child, and invocations to all the blessed caints in heaven to reward the gintleman who had saved her hoarded money-a smoking packet that she hugged to her breast—Mrs. Clancy, "the saynior laun-dress of Company B," as she had long styled herself, was prancing up and wn through the gathering crowd, her shrill voice overmastering all other clamor. The vigorous efforts of the men, directed by cool headed officers, soon best back the flames that were threatening the neighboring shanties, and leveled to the ground what remained of Private Clancy's home. The fire was extinguished almost as rapidly as it began, but the torrent of Mrs. Clancy's eloquence was still unstemmed. The adjurations of whist," the authoritative admonition of some old sergeant to "Stop your infernal noise," and the half maudlin yet appealing glances of her suffering lord were all flicient to check her.

It was not until the quiet tones of the colonel were heard that she began to cool down: "We've had enough of this Mrs. Clancy; be still, now, or we'll have to send you to the hospital in the coal cart." Mrs. Clancy knew that the colonel was a man of few words, and believed him to be one of less sentiment. She was afraid of him, and concluded it time to se threats and abuse and come down to the more effective role of wronged and suffering womanhood—a feat which she accomplished with the consummate ease of long practice, for the rows in the Clancy household were matters of garrison notoriety. The surgeon, too, had come, and, after quick examination of Clancy's condition, had directed him to be taken at once to the hospital; and thither his little daughter insisted on following him, despite the efforts of some of the women to detain her and dress her properly.

Before returning to his quarters the

plonel desired to know something of the igin of the fire. There was testimony nough and to spare. Every woman in wille had a theory to express and person to be heard at once and to the person por all others. It was not until to acd summarily ordered them to go to ir homes and not come near him that the colonel managed to get a clear state-ment from some of the men.

Clancy had been away all the evening, trinking as usual, and Mrs. Clancy was hing about Sudsville as much for evapathy and listeners as for him. Lit-tle Kate, who knew her father's haunts, had guided him home and was striving to get him to his little sleeping corner her mother's return, when in his en belolessness he fell against the

table, overturning the kerosene lamp, and the curtains were all affame in an instant. It was just after taps—or 10 o'clock—when Kate's shricks aroused the inmates of Sudsville and started the cry of "Fire." The flimsy structure of cry of "Fire." The filmsy structure or pine boards burned like so much tinder, and the child and her stupefied father had been dragged forth only in time to save their lives. The little one, after giving the alarm, had rushed again into the house and was tugging at his senseless form when rescue came for both-

As for Mrs. Clancy, at the first note of danger she had rushed screaming to the spot, but only in time to see the whole interior ablaze and to howl frantically for some man to save her money—it was all in the green box under the bed. For husband and child she had for the moment no thought. They were safely out of the fire by the time she got there. and she screamed and fought like a fury against the men who held her back when she would have plunged into the midst of it. It took but a minute for one or two men to burst through the flimsy wall with axes, to rescue the burning box and knock off the lid, It was a sight to see when the contents were handed to her. She knelt, wept, prayed, counted over bill after bill of smoking, steaming greenbacks, until suddenly recalled to her senses by the eager curiosity and the remarks of some of her fellow women. That she kept money, and a good deal of it, in her quarters had long been suspected and as fiercely denied; but no one had dreamed of such a sum as was revealed.

In her frenzy she had shrieked that the savings of her lifetime were burning -that there was over three thousand dollars in the box: but she hid her treasure and gasped and stammered and swore she was talking "wild like." "They was nothing but twos and wans," she vowed; yet there were women there who declared that they had seen tens and twenties as she hurried them through her trembling fingers, and Sudsville gossiped and talked for two hours after she was led away, still moaning and shiver-ing, to the bedside of poor Clancy, who was the miserable cause of it all. The colonel listened to the stories with such patience as could be accorded to witnesses who desired to give prominence to their personal exploits in subduing the flames and rescuing life and prop-erty. It was not until he and the group of officers with him had been engaged some moments in taking testimony that something was elicited which caused a new senation.

It was not by the united efforts of Suds-

ville that Clancy and Kate had been dragged from the flames, but by the in-dividual dash and determination of a single man; there was no discrepancy here, for the ten or a dozen who were wildly rushing about the house made no effort to burst into it until a young soldier leaped through their midst into the blazing doorway, was seen to throw a blanket over some object within, and the next minute appeared again, dragging a body through the flames. Then they had sprung to his aid, and between them Kate and "the ould man" were lifted into the open air. A moment later he had handed Mrs. Claney her packet of money, and—they hadn't seen him since. He was an officer, said they-a new one. They thought it must be the new lieuten ant of Company B; and the colonel looked quickly around and said a few words to his adjutant, who started up the hill forthwith. A group of officers and ladies were standing at the brow of the plateau east of the guard house, gazing lown upon the scene below, and other ladies, with their escorts, had gathered on a little knoll close by the road that led to Prairie avenue. It was past these that the adjutant walked rapidly away, swinging his hurricano lamp in his "Which way now, Billings?" called one

A the cavalry officers in the group. 'Over to Mr. Hayne's quarters," h

shouted back, never stopping at all. A silence fell upon the group at men tion of the name. They were the ladies from Capt, Rayner's and a few of their immediate friends. All eyes followed the twinkling light as it danced away eastward towards the gloomy coal sheds. Then there was sudden and intense inter est. The lamp had come to a stand still was deposited on the ground, and by its dim ray the adjutant could be seen bending over a dark object that was half sitting, half reclining at the platform of the shed. Then came a shout, "Come here, some of you." And most of the men ran to the spot.

For a moment not one word was spoken in the watching group; then Miss Travers' voice was heard: "What can it be? Why do they stop

there?" She felt a sudden hand upon her wrist, and her sister's lips at her ear:

"Come away, Nellie. I want to go home. Come!"

"But, Kate, I must see what it means," "No; come! It's-it's only some other drunken man probably. Come!" And she strove to lead her.

But the other ladies were curious too, and all, insensible, were edging over to the east as though eager to get in sight of the group. The recumbent object had been raised, and was seen to be the dark figure of a man whom the others began slowly to lead away. One of the group came running back to them; it was Mr. Foster.

"Come, ladies; I will escort you home, as the others are busy."

"What is the matter, Mr. Foster? was asked by half a dozen voices. "It was Mr. Hayne-badly burned, I fear. He was trying to get home after

having saved poor Clancy. "You don't say so! Oh, isn't there something we can do? Can't we go that way and be of some help?" was the eager petition of more than one of the ladies.

"Not now. They will have the doctor n a minute. He has not inhaled flame; it is all external; but he was partly blinded and could not find his way. He called to Billings when he heard him coming. I will get you all home and then go back to him. Come!" And, offering his arm to Mrs. Rayner, who was foremost in the direction he wanted to go-the pathway across the parade-Mr. Foster led them on. Of course, there was eager talk and voluble sympathy, but Mrs. Rayner spoke not a word. The others crowded around him with questions, and her silence passed unnoted ex-

cept by one. The moment they were inside the doo and alone Miss Travers turned to her sister: "Kate, what was this man's



"I mean the injuries at the fire." An unusual state of affairs existed at the big hospital for several days. Mrs. Clancy had refused to leave the bedside of her beloved Mike, and was permitted to remain. For a woman who was notorious as a virago and bully, who had beaten little Kate from her babyhood and abused and hammered her Michael until, between her and drink, he was but the wreck of a stalwart manhood, Mrs. Clancy had developed a degree of devo-tion that was utterly unexpected. In all the dozen years of their marital relations no such trait could be recalled; and yet there had been many an occasion within the past few years when Clancy's condition demanded gentle nursing and close attention—and never would have got it but for faithful little Kate. The child idolized the broken down man, and loved him with a tenderness that his weakness seemed but to augment a thousandfold, while it but served to infuriate her mother. In former years, when he was Sergt. Clancy and a fine soldier, many was the time he had intervened to save her from an undeserved thrashing; many a time had he seized her in his strong arms and confronted the furious woman with stern reproof. Between him and the child there had been the tenderest love, for she was all that was left to him of four. In the old days Mrs. Clancy had been the belle of the soldiers' balls, a fine looking woman, with indomitable powers as a dancer and conversationalist and an envied reputation for outshining all her rivals in dress and adornment.

"She would ruin Clancy, that she would," was the unanimous opinion of the soldiers' wives, but he seemed to minister to her extravagance with unfailing good nature for two or three years. He had been prudent, careful of his money, was a war soldier with big arrears of bounty and, tradition had it, a consummate skill in poker. He was the moneyed man among the sergeants when the dashing relict of a brother non-commissioned officer set her widow's cap for him and won. It did not take many years for her to wheedle most of his money away, but there was no cessation to th demand, no apparent limit to the supply. Both were growing older, and now it be-came evident that Mrs. Clancy was the elder of the two, and that the artificiality of her charms could not stand the test of frontier life. No longer sought as the belle of the soldiers' ball rooms, she aspired to leadership among their wives and families, and was accorded that preeminence rather than the fierce battle which was sure to follow any revolt. She became avaricious—some said miserly—and Clancy miserable. Then began the downward course. He took to drink soon after his return from a long, hard summer's campaign with the Indians. He lost his sergeant's stripes and went into the ranks.

There came a time when the new colonel forbade his re-enlistment in the cavalry regiment in which he had served so many a long year. He had been a brave and devoted soldier. He had a good friend in the infantry, he said, who wouldn't go back on a poor fellow who took a drop too much at times, and, to the surprise of many soldiers-officers and men-he was brought to the recruiting officer one day, sober, soldierly, and trimly dressed, and Capt. Rayner expressed his desire to have him enlisted for his company; and it was done. Mrs. Clancy was accorded the quarters and rations of a laundress, as was then the custom, and for a time-a very short time-Clancy seemed on the road to promotion to his old grade. The enemy tripped him, aided by the scoldings and abuse of his wife, and he never rallied Some work was found for him around the quartermaster's shops which saved him from guard duty or the guard house. The infantry-officers and men -seemed to feel for the poor, broken down old fellow, and to lay much of his woe to the door of his wife. There was charity for his faults and sympathy for his sorrows, but at last it had come to this. He was lying, sorely injured, in the hospital, and there were times when he was apparently delirious.

At such times, said Mrs. Clancy, she alone could manage him; and she urged that no other nurse could do more than excite or irritate him. To the unspeakable grief of little Kate she, too, was driven from the sufferer's bedside and artification to come this the e-on except when her mother gave permission Clancy had originally been carried into the general ward with the other patients, but the bospital steward two days afterwards told the surgeon that the patient moaned and cried so at night that the other sick men could not sleep, and offered to give us a little room in his own part of the building. The burly doctor ooked surprised at this concession on the part of the steward, who was a man tenacious of every perquisite and one who had made much complaint about the crowded condition of the hospital wards and small rooms ever since the frozen soldiers had come in. All the same the doctor asked for no explanation, but gladly availed himself of the steward's offer. Clancy was moved to this little room adjoining the steward's quarters forthwith, and Mrs. Clancy was

Another thing had happened to excite remark and a good deal of it. Nothing short of eternal damnation was Mrs. Clancy's frantic sentence on the head of her unlucky spouse the night of the fire. when she was the central figure of the picture, and when hundreds of witnesses to her words were grouped around. Correspondingly had she calted down the blessings of the Holy Virgin and all the saints upon the man who rescued and returned to her that precious packet of money. Everybody heard her, and it was out of the question for her to re-tract. Nevertheless, from within an hour after Clancy's admission to the hospital not another word of the kind escaped her lips. She was all patience and pity with the injured man, and she shunned all allusion to his preserver and her benefactor. The surgeon had beer called away, after doing all in his power to make Clancy comfortable-he was needed elsewhere—and only two or three soldiers and a hospital nurse still remained by his bedside, where Mrs. Clancy and little Kate were drying their tears and receiving consolation from the steward's wife. The doctor had mentioned a name as he went away, and it was seen that Clancy was striving to ask a question. Sergt. Nolan bent down: Lie quiet, Clancy, me boy; you must

"Who did he say was burned?" was he 'going to see?" gasped the ferer. "The new lieutenant, Clancy-him

"The new lieutenant, Clancy—nint that pulled ye out. He's a good one, and it's Mrs. Clancy that'll tell ye the same."
"Tell him what?" said she, turning about in sudden interest.
"About the lieutenant's pulling him."

out of the fire and saving your money."
"Indeed yes! The blessing of all the saints be upon his beautiful head,

"But who was it? What was his name, I say?" vehemently interrupted Clancy, half raising himself upon his elbow, and groaning with the effort. "What was his name? I didn't see him."

"Lieut. Hayne, man."
"Oh, my God!" gasped Clancy, and fell back as though struck a sudden blow.
She sprang to his side. "It's faint he is. Don't answer his questions, sergeant! He's beside himself! Oh, will ye never stop talking to him and lave him in pace? Go away, all of ye's—go away, I say, or ye'll dhrive him crazy wid yer— Bo quiet, Mikel don't ye spake agin." And she laid a broad, red hand upon his face. He only groaned again and threw his one unbandaged arm across his darkened eyes, as though to hide from sight of all.

From that time on she made no mention of the name that so strangely excited her stricken husband, but the watchers in the hospital the next night declared that in his ravings Clancy kept

calling for Lieut. Hayne.
Stannard's battalion of the cavalry came marching into the post two days after the fire, and created a diversion in the garrison talk, which for one long day had been all of that dramatic incident and its attendant circumstances. In social circles, among the officers and ladies, the main topic was the conduct of Mr. Hayne and the injuries he had sustained as a consequence of his gallant rescue. Among the enlisted men and the denizens of Sudsville the talk was principal ly of the revelation of Mrs. Clancy's hoard of greenbacks. I in both circles a singular story was j beginning to creep around, and it to the effect that Clancy had cried aloud and fainted dead away and that Mrs. Clancy had gone into hysterics when they were told that Lieut. Hayne was the man to whom the one owed his life and the other her money. Some one met Capt. Rayner on the sidewalk the morning Stannard came marching home and asked him if he had heard the queer story about Clancy. He had not, and it was told him then and

Rayner did not even attempt to laugh at it or turn it off in any way. He looked dazed, stunned, for a moment, turned very white and old looking, and, hardly saying good day to his informant, faced about and went straight to his quarters. He was not among the crowd that gathared to welcome the incoming cavalrymen that bright, crisp, winter day, and that evening Mrs. Rayner went to the hospital to ask what she could do for Clancy and his wife. Capt. Rayner always expected her to see that every care and attention was paid to the sick and needy of his company, she explained to the doctor, who could not recall having seen her on a similar errand before, al though sick and needy of Company B were not unknown in garrisons where he had served with them. She spent a good while with Mrs. Clancy, whom sh had never noticed hitherto, much to the laundress' indignation, and concerning whose conduct she had been known to express herself in terms of extreme disapprobation. But in times of suffering such things are forgotten; Mrs. Rayner was full of sympathy and interest; there was nothing she was not eager to send them, and no thanks were necessary. She could never do too much for the men of her husband's company.

Yet there was a member of her husband's company on whom in his suffering neither she nor the captain saw fit to call. Mr. Havne's eyes were seriously injured by the flames and heat, and he was now tiving in darkness. It might be a month, said the doctor, before he could use his eyes again.

"Only think of that poor fellow all alone out there on that ghastly prairie and unable to read!" was the exclamation of one of the cavalry ladies in Mrs. Rayner's presence; and, as there was an awkward silence and somebody had to break it, Mrs. Rayner responded: "If I lived on Prairie avenue I should

consider blindness a blessing." It was an unfortunate remark. There ras strong sympathy developing for Hayne all through the garrison. Mrs. Rayner never meant that it should have any such significance, but inside of twenty-four bours, in course of which her language had been repeated some dozens of times and distorted quite as many, the generally accepted version of the story was that Mrs. Rayner, so far from expressing the faintest sympathy or sorrow for Mr. Hayne's misfortune, so far from expressing the natural gratifi-cation which a lady should feel that it was an officer of her regiment who had reached the scene of danger ahead of the cavalry officer of the guard, had said in so many words that Mr. Hayne ought to be thankful that blindness was the worst

thing that had come to him. There was little chance for harmony after that. Many men and some women, of course, refused to believe it, and said they felt confident that she had been misrepresented. Still, all knew by this time that Mrs. Rayner was bitter against Hayne, and had heard of her denuncia tion of the colonel's action. So, too, had the colonel heard that she openly declared that she would refuse any invitation extended to her or to her sister which might involve her accepting hos pitality at his house. These things do

get around in most astonishing ways. Then another complication arose Hayne, too, was mixing matters. The major commanding the battalion, a man in no wise connected with his misfortunes, had gone to him and urged, with the doctor's full consent, that he should be moved over into and become an inmate of his household in garrison. He had a big, roomy house. His wife earnestly added her entreaties to the major's, but all to no purpose: Mr. Hayne firmly declined. He thanked the major; he rose and bent over the lady's hand and thanked her with a voice that was full of gentleness and gratitude; but he said that he had learned to live in solitude. Sam was accustomed to all his ways, and he had every comfort he needed. His wants were few and simple. She would not be content, and urged him further. He loved reading: surely he would miss his books and would need some one to read aloud to him, and there were so many ladies in the garrison who would be glad to meet at her house and read to him by turns. He loved music, she heard, and there was her piano, and she knew several who would be delighted to sme and play for him by the hour. Il shook his read, and the bandages hid the tears that came to his smarting eyes. He had made arrangements to be read aloud to, he said; and as for music, that must wait awhile.

The kind woman retired dismayedshe could not understand such obduracy, and her husband felt rebuffed. Stan nard, of the cavalry, too, came in with his gentle wife. She was loved throughout the regiment for her kindliness and grace of mind, as well as for her devo-

days of the Indian wars, and Stannard had made a similar proffer and been similarly refused, and he had gone away indignant. He thought Mr. Hayne too bumptious to live; but he bore no malice. bumptious to live; but he bore no malice, and his wrath was soon over. Many of the cavalry officers called in person and tendered their services, and were very civilly received, but all offers were positively declined. Just what the infantry officers should do was a momentous question. That they could no longer hold aloof was a matter that was quickly settled, and three of their number went through the chill gleaming of the wintry eve and sent in their cards by wintry eve and sent in their cards by Sam, who ushered them into the cheer less front room, while one of their num ber followed to the doorway which led to the room in rear, in which, still con-fined to his bed by the doctor's advice, the injured officer was lying. It was Mr. Ross who went to the door and cleared his throat and stood in the pres-ence of the man to whom, more than five years before, he had refused his hand. The others listened anxiously: "Mr. Hayne, this is Ross. I come

with Foster and Graham to say deeply we regret your injuries, and to tender our sympathy and our services." There was dead silence for a moment. Foster and Graham stood with h

that beat unaccountably hard, looking at each other in perplexity. never reply?

The answer came at last—a question:
"To what injuries do you allude, Mr.

Even in the twilight they could see the sudden flush of the Scotchman's cheek. He was a blunt fellow, but, as the senior, had been chosen spokesman for the three. The abrupt question staggered him. It was a second or two be "I mean the injuries at the fire," he

This time no answer whatever. It was

growing too painful. Ross looked in bewilderment at the bandaged face and and again broke the silence:

"We hope you won't deny us the right to be of service, Mr. Hayne. If there is anything we can do that you need or would like"— hesitatingly. "You have nothing further to say?"

asked the calm voice from the pillow. "I-don't know what else we can say," faltered Ross, after an instant's pause. The answer came, firm and prompt, but icily cool:

"Then there is nothing that you can And the three took their departure, sore at heart.

There were others of the infantry who had purposed going to see Hayne that evening, but the story of Ross's experithat even now Mr. Havne made the condition of the faintest advance from his regimental comrades a full confession of

error. He would have no less. That evening the colonel sat by his bedside and had an earnest talk. He ventured to expostulate with the invalid on his refusal to go to the major's or to Stannard's. He could have so many comforts and delicacies there that would be impossible here. He did not refer to edibles and drinkables alone, he said, with a smile; but Hayne's patient face gave no sign of relenting. He heard the colonel through, and then said slowly

and firmly:
"I have not acted hastily, sir; I appreciate their kindness, and am not ungrateful. Five years ago my whole life was changed. From that time to this I have done without a host of things that used to be indispensable, and have abjured them one and all for a single luxury that I cannot live without the luxury of utter independence—the joy of knowing that I owe no man anythingthe blessing of being beholden to no one on earth for a single service I cannot pay or. It is the one luxury left me



It was a clear winter's evening, sharply cold, about a week after the fire, when, as Mrs. Rayner came down the stairway equipped for a walk, and was passing the parlor door without stopping, Mis Travers caught sight of and called to

"Are you going walking, Kate? Do wait a moment, and I'll go with you." Any one in the hall could have shared the author's privilege and seen the expression of annoyance and confusion that

appeared on Mrs. Rayner's face. 'I thought you were out. Did not Mr.

Graham take you walking?" "He did; but we wandered into Mrs. Waldron's, and she and the major begged us to stay, and we had some music, and then the first call sounded for retreat and Mr. Graham had to go, so he brought me home. I've had no walk and need exer

"But I don't like you to be out after sunset. That cough of yours'-"Disappeared the day after I got here, Kate, and there hasn't been a vestige of it since. This high, dry climate put ar end to it. No, I'll be ready in one minute more. Do wait."

Mrs. Rayner's hand was turning the knob while her sister was hurrying to the front door and drawing on her heavy jacket as she did so. The former faced her impatiently:

"I don't think you are at all courteous to your visitors. You know just as well as I do that Mr. Fosier or Mr. Royce or some other of those young officers are sure to be in just at this hour. You really are very thoughtless, Nellie."

Miss Travers stopped short in her prep

"Kate Rayner," she began, impressivey, "it was only night before last that ou rebuked me for sitting here with Mr. Blake at this very hour, and asked me how I supposed Mr. Van Antwerp would like it. Now you"—

"Fudge! I cannot stay and listen to such talk. If you must go, wait a few minutes until I get back. I-I want to make a short call. Then I'll take you." "So do I want to make a short callover at the doctor's; and you are going right to the hospital, are you not?"

"How do you know I am?" asked Mrs. Rayner, reddening. "You do go there every evening, it

seems to me. "I don't. Who told you I did?" "Several people mentioned your kind ness and attention to the Clancys, Kate.

I have heard it from many sources." "I wish people would mind their own affairs." wailed Mrs. Rayner, poevishly.

"Bo do 1, aste; out they never nave, and nover will, especially with an en-gaged girl. I have more to complain of than you, but it doesn't make me for-lorn, whereas you look fearfully worried about nothing."

lorn, whereas you look fearfully worried about nothing."

"Who says I'm worried?" asked Mrs. Rayner, with sudden vehemence.

"You look worried, Kate, and haven't been at all like yourself for several days. Now, why shouldn't I go to the hospital with you? Why do you tay to hide your going from me? Don't you know that I must have heard the strange stories that are flitting about the garrison? Haven't I asked you to set me right if Lhave been told a wrong one? Kate, you are fretting yourself to death about something, and the captain looks worried and ill. I cannot but think it has some connection with the case of Mr. Hayne. Why should the Clapcys"—

"You have no right to think any such thing," answered her sister, angrily. "We have suffered too much at his hands or on his account already, and I never want to hear such words from your lips. It would outrage Capt. Rayner to hear that my sister, to whom he has given a home and a welcome, was linking herself with those who side with that—that thief."

that—that thief."

"Katel Oh, how can you use such words? How dare you speak so of an officer? You would not tell me what he was accused of; but I tell you that if it be theft I don't believe it, and no one

There was a sudden footfall on the porch without, and a quick, sharp, imperative knock at the door. Mrs. Rayner fled back along the hall towards the dining room. Miss Travers, hesitating

but a second, opened the door.

It was the soldier telegraph operator with a dispatch envelope in his hand.

"It is for Mrs. Rayner, miss, and an answer is expected. Shall I wait?"

Mrs. Rayner came hastily forward from her place of refuge within the dining room, took the envelope without a word and passed into the parlor, where, standing beneath the lamp, she tore it open, glanced anxiously at its contents, then threw it with an exclamation of peevish indignation upon the table.

"You'll have to answer for yourself Nellie. I cannot straighten your affairs and mine too." And with that she was going, but Miss Travers called her back. The message simply read: "No letter in four days. Is anything wrong? Answer paid," and was addressed to Mrs. Rayner and signed S. V. A.

"I think you have been extremely neg-lectful," said Mrs. Rayner, who had turned and now stood watching the rising color and impatiently tapping foot of her younger sister. Miss Travers bit her lips and compressed them hard. There was an evident struggle in her mind between a desire to make an impulsive and sweeping reply and an effort control herself.

"Will you answer a quiet question or two?" she finally asked. "You know perfectly well I will," was the sisterly rejoinder.

"How long does it take a letter to go from here to New York?" 'Five or six days, I suppose."

Miss Travers stepped to the door, briefly told the soldier there was no answer, thanked him for waiting, and returned "You are not going to reply?" asked Mrs. Rayner, in amaze. "I am not; and I inferred you did not

intend to. Now another question. How many days have we been here?" "Eight or nine-nine, it is." "You saw me post a letter to Mr. Van

Antwerp as we left the Missouri, did you Yes. At least I suppose so." "I wrote again as soon as we g

settled here, three days after that, did I "You said you did," replied Mrs. Rayner, ungraciously.
"And you, Kate, when

self have been prompt to declare that I say what I mean. Very probably it may have been four days from the time that letter from the transfer reached Wall street to the time the next one could get to him from here, even had I written the night we arrived. Possibly you forget that you forbade my doing so, and sent me to bed early. Mr. Van Antwerp has simply failed to remember that I had gone several hundred miles farther west; and even had I written on the train twice a day, the letters would not have reached him uninterruptedly. By this time he is beginning to get them fast enough. And as for you, Kate, you are quite as unjust as he. It augurs badly for my future peace; and—I am learning two lessons here, Kate."

"What two, pray?" "That he can be foolishly unreliable in estimating a woman."

"And the other?" "That you may be persistently unreliable in your judgment of a man.'

Verily, for a young woman with sweet, girlish face, whom we saw but a week agone twitching a kitten's ears and saying little or nothing, Miss Travers was displaying unexpected fighting qual ities. For a moment, Mrs. Rayner glared at her in tremulous indignation and dis-"You—you ought to be ashamed of

yourself!" was her eventual outbreak. But to this there was no reply. Miss Travers moved quietly to the doorway, turned and looked her angry sister in the eye, and said: "I shall give up the walk and will go

to my room. Excuse me to any visitors "You are not going to write to him now, when you are angry, I hope?"

"I shall not write to him until to-morrow, but when I do I shall tell him this, Kate: that if he desire my confidence he will address his complaints and inquiries to me. If I am old enough to be engaged to him, in your opinion, I am equally old enough to attend to such details as the

Mrs. Rayner stood one moment as though astounded; then she flew to the door and relieved her surcharged bosom as follows: "Well, I pity the man you marry, whether you are lucky enough to keep this one or not!" and flounced indignantly out of the house.

When Capt. Rayner came in, half an hour afterwards, the parlor was deserted. He was looking worn and dispirited. Finding no one on the ground floor, he went to the foot of the stairs, and called:

A door opened above: "Kate has gone out, captain." "Do you know where, Nellie?"

"Over to the hospital, I think; though cannot say." She heard him sigh deeply, move irresolutely about the hall for a moment,

then turn and go out.

At his gate he found two figures dimly risible in the gathering darkness; they had stopped on hearing his footstep. One was an officer in uniform, wrappe in heavy overcoat, with a fur cap, and a bandage over his eyes. The other was a Chinese servant, and it was the latter who asked:

"This Maje Waldlon's?" "No," said he, hastily. "Maj. Waldron's is the third door beyond." At the sound of his voice the officer

quickly started, but spoke in low, measured tone: "Straight ahead, Sam." And the Chinaman led him on. Rayner stood a moment watching them, bitter thoughts coursing through for air, and now he was being lave again. This time it was his old country Waldron, who honored him. Probabit was another dinner. Little by his at this rate, the time would seen on when Mr. Hayne would be asked on where and he and his corresponding dropped. He turned miserably so and went back to the billiard rooms the store. When Mrs. Rayner rangibell for ten that evening he had not appeared, and she cent a messenger him.

It was a brilliant mosalit evening. A strong prairie gale had begun to blow from the northwest, and was banging shutters and whirling pebbles at a furious rate. At the sound of the trumpetor walling tattoo a brace of young officers calling on the ladies took their leave. The captain had retired to his den, or study, where he shut himself up a good deal of late, and thither Mrs. Rayner followed him and closed the door after her. Throwing a cloak over her shoulders Miss Travers stepped out on the plazes and gazed is delight upon the mosalit panorams—the snow covered summits and gazed is delight upon the moonlit panorama—the snow covered summits to the south and west, the rolling expanse of upland prairie between, the rough outlines of the foothills softened in the silvery light, the dark shadows of the barracks across the parade, the twinkling lights of the sergeants as they took their stations, the soldierly forms of the officers hastening to their companies far across the frozen level.

Suddenly she became aware of two

Suddenly she became aware of two Suddenly she became aware of two forms coming down the walk. They is sued from Maj. Waldron's quarters, and the door closed behind them. One was a young officer; the other, she meedily made out, a Chinese servant, who was guiding his master. She knew the pair in an instant, and her first impulse was to retire. Then she reflected that he could not see, and she wanted to look, so the strend. They had always received. she stayed. They had almost reached her gate when a wild blast whirled the officer's cape about his ears and sent some sheets of music flying across the road. Leaving his master at the fence, the Chinaman sped in pursuf,, and the next thing she noted was that Mr. Hayne's fur cap was blown from his head, and that he was groping for it

helplessly.

There was no one to call, no one to assist. She hesitated one minute, looked anxiously around, then sprang to the gate, picked up the cap, pulled it well down over the bandaged eyes, seized the young officer firmly by the arm, drew him within the gate and led him to the shelter of the piazza. Once out of the fury of the gale, she could hear his question, "Did you get it all, Sam?"
"Not yet," she answered. Oh, how she

longed for a deep contraltol "He is coming. He will be here in a moment."
"I am so sorry to have been a troub!

to you," he began again, vaguely.
"You are no trouble to me. I'm glad was where I happened to see you and could help."

He spoke no more for a minute. She

stood gazing at all that was visible of the pale face below the darkened eyes. It was so clear cut, so refined it.

and the lips under the sweep long mustache, though set and conversed were delicate and pink. He turned his head eagerly towards the parade; but Sam was still far away. The music had scattered and was leading him a lively

"Isn't my servant coming?" he asked constrainedly. "I fear I'm keeping you. Please do not wait. He will find me here.

You were going somewhere."

"No—unless it was here." She was trembling now. "Please be patient, Mr.
Hayne. Sam may be a minute or two yet, and here you are out of the wind. Again she looked in his face. He was listening eagerly to her words, as though striving to "place" her voice. Could she be mistaken? Was he, too, not trembling? Beyond all doubt his lips were quivering

"May I not know who it is that led me here?" he asked, gently. She hesitated, hardly knowing how to

tell him. "Try and guess," she laughed, nerv "But you couldn't. You do not ously. know my name. It is my good fortune, Mr. Hayne. You-you saved my kitten; I-your cap."

There was no mistaking his start. Be yond doubt he had winced as though stung, and was now striving to grope his way to the railing. She divined his purpose in an instant, and her slender hand was laid pleadingly yet firmly on his arm. "Mr. Hayne, don't go. Don't think of going. Stay here until Sam comes. He's

coming now," she faltered. "Is this Capt. Rayner's house?" he asked, hoarse and low.

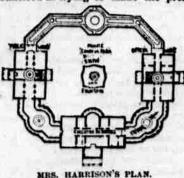
"No matter whose it is! I welcome you here. You shall not go," she cried impulsively, and both little hands were tugging at his arm. He had found the railing, and was pulling himself toward the gate, but her words, her clinging

hands, were too persuasive.
"I cannot realize this," he said. do not understand"-

"Do not try to understand it, Mr. Hayne. If I am only a girl, I have a right to think for myself. My father was a soldier-I am Nellie Travers-and if he were alive I know well he would have had me do just what I have done this night. Now won't you stay?"

And light was beaming in through his darkened eyes and gladdening his soul with a rapture he had not known for years. One instant he seized and clasped her hand. "May God bless you!" was all he whispered, but so softly that even she did not hear him. He bowed low over the slender white hand and stayed. Continued next Saturday

Plans for a New Executive Manslor Mrs. Harrison has prepared a design for a new executive mansion in the shape of additions to the present structure. She desires to inaugurate a movement which will relieve her successors from the inconveniences which she has encountered in trying to make the presi-



dent's family comfortable. She has had several conferences with senators and representatives regarding the inadequate accommodations of the executive mansion for the dual purposes of offices and residence, and has received assurance of co-operation in her plans. The theory of Mrs. Harrison's design is the preservation of the original building intact, the addition on the east and west respectively of counterparts of the original structure in general architectural style, their connection with the main edifice by a colonnade range, and the extension on the south of a wide conservatory or winter garden, with a central rotunda or palm house, the entire series of structures forming the four sides of an inner park. To carry out Mrs. Harrison's