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MARY, KNITTING.

When Mary atts a knitting Beside the coay fire.
Her bending face so happy
With motherhood's desire.
It makes the room seem holy. A consecrated place, With God's smile in the firelight That flickers on her face.

The clicking of the needles. The crumble of the coals, Make such a quiet music

For our two quiet souls!

And when the little mether

Sprends out the garment small, The look, the touch, she gives it Like saintly blessings fail.

We sit until the twilight

And in the creaking shutter A little night wind stira. Then Mary's face sinks lower Unto the little gown Until she seems to kiss it Refore she lays it down.

—Harper's Barar.

A SOLDIER'S WIFE.

A more desolate site for a fort could not have been selected by the government, However, the United States government was not looking for beautiful scenery when it had the post built, but for a location close to the treacherous Indian and where the soldiers could quickly move to the front.

Around the fort stretched the monotonous plains, rising and falling-the earth's waves-in every direction until in the distance they seemed to meet the sky. It was a dreary, desolate place, the only sign of vegetation being the sagebrush, the grease weed and bunches of cactus everywhere. There were acres of alkali, all burning beneath the sun during the day and freezing beneath the moon at night. There was no animal life upon all the expanse of country either except the prairie dogs and now

and then a lean and hungry coyote. So dismally calm was the landscape that even the buzzard besitated in his stately flight, and the little gray hawk sailed on and on, doubtless with his eyes closed to the earth.

As a general thing there was amuse ment enough at the fort. Men assigned to the post made up their minds that they depended upon each other for amusements, and their wives shared the same belief, and then were they not soldiers, and were not the women soldiers' wives? But of course the little petty jealousies and little petty quarrels crept into that particular post just the same as they had crept into every other post and would continue to creep in as long as the government supported forts and as long as men and women lived and breathed, for that matter. It was very lonely around the post now, for the men had gone to the front. The war had been declared. That awful specter, dreaded by every wife of a soldier and longed for by the men, had come. There was considerable speculation as to its probable length and much fear that they would not be called out, they were so far removed from the railroad. Perhaps the war department would not even remember the fort was in existence.

The women were not anxious for the war. They knew what it meant. Their faces were very sad when the orders came calling out the four troops of cavalry that made up the post. There was wild cheering among the enlisted men down around the stables and among the vonnesters, for each one looked forward

and saw filmself returning at least captain, if not a major, and in flights of fancy even a lientenant colonel. They did not stop to think that they might be made only first lieutenants. It was all excitement to the women,

too, for a few days, for they were so busy assisting the men that they did not think of the long, weary days. Hesides, they really did not believe that their husbands would see any actual warfare. They thought it would all be over within a few weeks and then Johnnie would come marching home, and they would have something else to talk about beside the commonplace things of life. But one woman thought about it. She was the wife of the second lieutenant of Troop D. They had married the very ext day after his graduation from the Point, and his first station had been at this lonely fort. He told her to

be brave. "You are a soldier's wife," he said to her, as she burst into tears and buried her face on his shoulder.

"Yes, I am a soldier's wife, but that does not prevent me from having a

heart," she answered. "No," he replied, "and, having a brave heart, a true heart and a knowledge that you are a soldier's wife, you must face all sorrows and trials with out flinching."

The words appealed to her. The half a dozen other women in the post thought so much of her, a mere girl and pitied her so that her husband should be ordered to the front that they asked the major to assign him as the officer in charge of the fort during the absence of the troops, but he begged so hard to go that he was allowed to do so. The women spoke to his wife about it; told them what they had done.

"Robert wants to go," she said. "It is the chance of a lifetime with him, and does not his country call?"

"But you?" answered one of the women. She looked her questioner straight in

the eyes. "I am a soldier's wife," she replied

The rush was soon over, and the men were now mounted and ready to go. The officers hade their wives goodby. and they, too, sprang into the saddle. The bugle sounded, and the troops took up the march over to the railroad. The women stood and looked across the sun

cursed plain until every particle of dust raised by the horses had settled, until all the world appeared just as before, and then each went into her own house. That night they gathered at the major's house and sat gazing out over the darkened plain and spoke of the absent ones. The long weary waiting had begun. The loneliness was more intense than

ever at the fort. Five troopers and a property and the women, and they were the only signs of life down around the quarters and the stables. The lieutenant was morose and gloomy that he should have been selected as the one to remain behind and was not accounted much company to the women the first few days, but gradually he became recon-ciled to his fate and sat with them every evening and talked of the probable

cassed the improbability of action. They sent once a week for the mail. The first letters and papers brought word that the four troops had joined their regiment, and the letters were filled with gossip about the officers and their families, for a regiment is naught but one large family. Then came days of watching and waiting, and the next was the movement of troops to Santiago.

length of absence of the men and dis-

Then the women knew that the war had begun in earnest. The full realization of it came home to them. The older women remembered when it was nothing for their husbands to be ordered out to suppress the Indians, while one or two remembered the civil war, but there was nothing of that kind for the wife of the second lieutenant to remember. She carried herself bravely, however, and proudly said that she was the wife of a soldier and all soldiers' wives should be brave, a remark that greatly pleased the others.

The women learned more about her now that her husband was not present to monopolize all her time. They learned that she was quite alone in the world, except for him; that she was an orphan and that the aunt who had reared her had died. This increased their sympathy for her, if that were possible, for she had their sympathy already. They could see that her thoughts were all of her husband, but if they endeavored to speak words of comfort to her she replied, "I am a soldier's wife."

The news traveled slowly to them. That perhaps was the hardest. Their husbands might have been in battle and have been wounded or killed; the four troops might be wiped out and it would he fully a week before they would know it. When the papers did arrive, there was a burried glance at the headlines and then for the regimental head.

The battle of Santiago had been fought and won. The news had been telegraphed undersea and overland and the papers had come out with the particulars under display headlines. It was just a week after that the papers reached the fort. The trooper brought them in the evening and delivered them to the women, sitting under the cotton-wood trees that skirted the parade ground. The wife of the second lieutenant had gone for a walk and was not with them. A cry burst from the white lips of the women. The headlines told them that their men had been in the thick of the fight. They glanced down the columns, read the account and of the deeds of bravery of their men. They read the list of the dead and wounded.

The wife of the second lieutenant came up to them. She saw the papers lying in the laps of the women; she glanced at their faces. She read the

"There has been a battle?" she said interrogatively.

"Yes," said one of the women. "And Robert?" she asked. "He was in the thick of the fight.

leading his men on and obsering them," answered one of her companions. "The how he struggled on in the face of the deadly fire, encouraging his men. Some of the men fell, but with a cheer on their lips for him, and then came an

awful cross fire." She looked out over the plain, the moonlight changing the grease wood and sagebrush into shadows and transforming the bods of alkali into shining waves of silver.

"I knew he was brave," she said, and he was wounded?" "Yes: very severely, and"- the

woman's voice broke. There was the sound of sobbing, and

placed her arm about the waist of the younger woman. 'My dear' - began one of them. She drew away and unwound the arm about her. Her face was terribly drawn.

Then she turned and walked slowly into her house.-R. A. Eaton in St. Louis Republic.

"Am I not a soldier's widow?" she

Quite Another Question. "I could die for you!" he cried pas-

"Of course," she replied. "But would you?"

Some girls are so practical and prosaic, you know. - Chicago Post.

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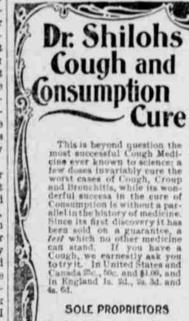
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