## A Bit of Seaweed

A Story of the War For Cuba.

By ETHEL HOLMES

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* Kate Langdon was a character. Not especially pretty, she had a way with her that first attracted people's attention, then won them. Some said she was very deep, others that she was a simple child of nature. She was certainly reckless. She would flirt with several men at a time without heeding the consequences and when cornered would, if possible, dodge them all by flight, leaving them to settle the matter among themselves.

And so it was that some blamed her, others defended her, but all were amused by her. It was very interesting to see a middy come upon the edge of the vortex, get drawn in, drop out, giving place perhaps to a fellow middy, perhaps to an officer. Whether the girl realized the wrong she was often doing, whether she was unconscious of it or whether she had no appreciation of the tenderness of men's hearts, certain it is that she never seem. ed either ashamed of her conquests or proud of them. Indeed, she gave every evidence that she regretted them.

A fine field for such girls is either the West Point or Annapolls academy. where young men are trained for the army or navy. Kate Langdon the year of the breaking out of the Spanish-American war visited the Naval academy as the guest of her aunt, Mrs. Lyall, the wife of one of the profe tsors. She hadn't been there a week before she had half a dozen middies "by the

In the class to be graduated the following spring were two young men. Hector Peckham and Leslie Holt. Both and exhausted. met Kate Langdon, and both fell violently in love with her. In the government academies the standard of honwhich was really the favored one. Nor several other middles might not after all carry off the prize.

Peckham finally won. Kate gave him her heart and, to the surprise of every one, gave him the whole of it. There were a number of disappointments in consequence of this victory. the most serious of which was Lexile Holt. Kate had given him a great deal of encouragement and for some time after she came to a decision hadn't the heart to break with him. When it finally came out that Peckham had won, Holt went to see her to ask if the news were true. She confessed. and he told her that she had wrecked

Young men have said this before to young women, to marry some other and live bappily. Some have remained single, cherishing their idol in their hearts, to meet that idol when past middle age and find it demolished.

last meeting with Kate Langdon made the first change in her. By them her light, gladsome nature received its first

Meanwhile the Cuban war was coming on, and ships and munitions were being hurriedly put in condition for And the middles, too, were being burried on in their academic course. to be graduated as soon as bostilities

The following spring Peckham and Holt were graduated and assigned to a war vessel sailing for Cuba. Peckham and Kate were married before he sailed. The wedding was notable from the number of disappointed young men in attendance. But every man of them swore by the bride and considered the groom the luckiest man that had ever voced woman.

Kate, having joined the navy matrimonially, felt at home at a naval station, and her aunt, who adored her, invited ber to remain with her indefinite-So Kate stayed where she would be in touch with her husband far more than at home. That was an exciting summer. First came news of the fight in Manila bay, then the entrance of the Spanish Admiral Cervera's fleet into Cuban waters, its attempt to es-

cape and its destruction Peckham and Holt went through this last fight, and when it was over the latter officed was ordered to the command of a small supply boat and directed to sail for the Brooklyn navy

"Can I do anything for you at home?" he asked of Peckham.

"Nothing, unless you will take a letter for my wife. You will mall it as soon as you get to Brooklyn.'

"With pleasure," replied Holt. Peckham wrote a short note to his wife and gave it to Holt.

"The trap I'm to command is not very seaworthy," said the latter. "If I meet a big blow I may not get through. But I promise you, Hector, that your wife shall have the letter." Peckham hoped that his friend would get through safely, and they

One morning young Mrs. Peckham was sitting in her room at Annapolis reading accounts of the naval tight off Cuba-she had read them many times before-when a draft blew open the goor and there came into the room a strong smell of the sea. Standing before the opening was Leslie Holt, pale

"Why, Mr. Holt!" exclaimed Mrs.

Without a word he handed her a letor is very high. Neither of the cadets | ter. Thinking it to be from her huswould take the slightest advantage of band or that it might bring her bad the other, but neither could find out news from him, her attention was momentarily turned from its bearer to were they ever sure but that one of the letter. It bore evidence of having been wet. A dampness clung to it, and the letters of the address had run together. She tore it open and read it. It was simply an announcement that the writer was well, had suffered nothing in the recent engagement and hoped before many weeks to return to her. Having satisfied herself that it boded no harm to the man she loved, she turned to its bearer. He was not there.

Thinking that what had passed between them before her marriage had led him to go away without even having been thanked, she tossed the letter on a table and ran out into the hall to stop him. Not finding him in the hall, she went out on to the porch. He was not there, nor was he anywhere to be seep, though there was nothing for some distance to obstruct her vision.

"Strange!" she said to herself and live long-never recovered from his in- over her that the affair was in some I the effect it would have on her."

her husband. Going to the table, she was about to snatch up the letter when she saw that it was not where she had put it. Looking on the floor for it, she did not flud it.

"I'm sure something has happened to Hector," she mouned. "Leslie Helt slipped away on purpose so that he wouldn't have to say anything to me about it. But how pale he looked and how exhausted."

Thinking a draft might have blown the letter off the table, she looked about until she saw semething of a light brownish color in a corner. Sure that it was the letter, which had been discolored, she seized it. What was her surprise to find a seaweed.

There was something so uncanny in all this that she was now thoroughly frightened. Dropping the seaweed, she put both bands to her temples in an effort to regain her equanimity. Then, rushing out of the room, she ran o ber aunt and sank in a sween.

Ten minutes later Dr. Coggswell, medical officer at the academy, was called t- Professor Lyall's quarters. He found arrs. Peckham lying on a bed in a high state of nervous excitement, Mrs. Lyall told the doctor, before he saw the patient, the story her niece had told her, and he did not permit the invalid to go over it again. He said that the expectation for a long while that her husband would at any time participate in a naval engagement and the excitement attending the recent fight had been a strain upon ber nerves that had produced ballucination. He prescribed a sedative and left direcions that she was to be kept quiet.

But Mrs. Peckham did not recover from the strain as soon as was expected. And one morning something eccurred to give her a terrible back set. A telegram from Key West appeared in a morning paper stating that a little naval tender, commanded by Leslie Holt, had been wrecked on one of the keys and all on board had been lost,

Mrs. Lyall kept this news from her niece as long as she dared, hoping the invalid would gain strength and there would be less danger in communicating it to her. Finally, fearing that Kate might hear it from others, she told her of young Holt's death.

If anything was needed to complete the conviction that the wraith of the man who had told her she had wrecked his life had visited her, the announce ment of his death supplied it. A subsequent letter, however, from Peckham served to lighten the blow. Kate felt that the matter had no reference to her husband; it was between her and Leslie Holt. She considered it a punishment for having triffed with him and brooded and brooded, and all efforts on the part of her friends to convince her that there was nothing in it except a creation of her own brain un-

der a nervous strain were fruitless. In time Peckham came north, and it was hoped that his presence would lift the cloud that hung over his wife. It helped her, but did not cure her. She went about as before, but how changed!

"What a sad sight is Mrs. Peckham." said one of the men with whom she had trifled-one of the older ones, an officer. "The matter proves the innocence of her action when so many of us were attentive to her. Wicked people are not remorseful. The tender onsciences are usually to be found in innocence. Had she been a heartless. a wicked flirt the fact that she had wrecked a man's life would have pleas. ed her. Instead of this, his telling her that she had wrecked his life wrecked hers. 'He should not have said such a thing to her, and he would not have

fatuation. The words be used at his way connected with a misfortune to It is years since this shock came

to Mrs. Peckham, and, although it has somewhat worn away, it has left its effects. She is still beloved, for at beart she is the same innocent woman, though very different from the days of her girlhood. Every one except herself refers the visit of the wraith to a shock coming from overstrained nerves. She would as soon doubt her existence as doubt the reality of the visit. After sufficiently recovering to talk about it she declared that she not only smelled the salt air of the sea, but saw Lealle Holf standing before her-not lifelike, it is true. because he was very pale, and he had the appearance of having been in the water. The only thing to prove her position was the letter she received and the seaweed, but that disappeared during her first shock and never was

THE UMBRELLA AN ILLUSION?

Well, How About the Millinery and

Straw Hats It Saves? The psychology of the umbrella is worth studying. It does not really, of course, protect the individual from the rain. It does little more than shelter his head. The rain strikes his legs and his body just the same. But it saves the rain from striking one's face, which is disagreeable. It gives a certain illusion of shelter and thus shelters the psychology more than it does the body.

We now have waterproofed clothing, which is a much more effective protection than the umbrella, but people go on buying and using umbrellas just the same. Their bodies do not really need them, but their minds have become accustomed to them. Meanwhile letter carriers and policemen go without them and do not seem to get any wetter than other people do.

It is probable that a colored umbrella protects a woman's psychology in a rainstorm better than a black umbrella would. Having chosen the color in accordance with fashion and her own taste in tints, she has, as it were, a anopy of consciousness over her, affording her a fine protection. On the other hand, a black umbrella is a better protection for a man's psychology than a colored one would be. A red umbrella over the average man, now, would seem to him to gather all the raindrops from the Hoosac range to Mount Desert and precipitate them upon his egregious head.-Boston Tran-

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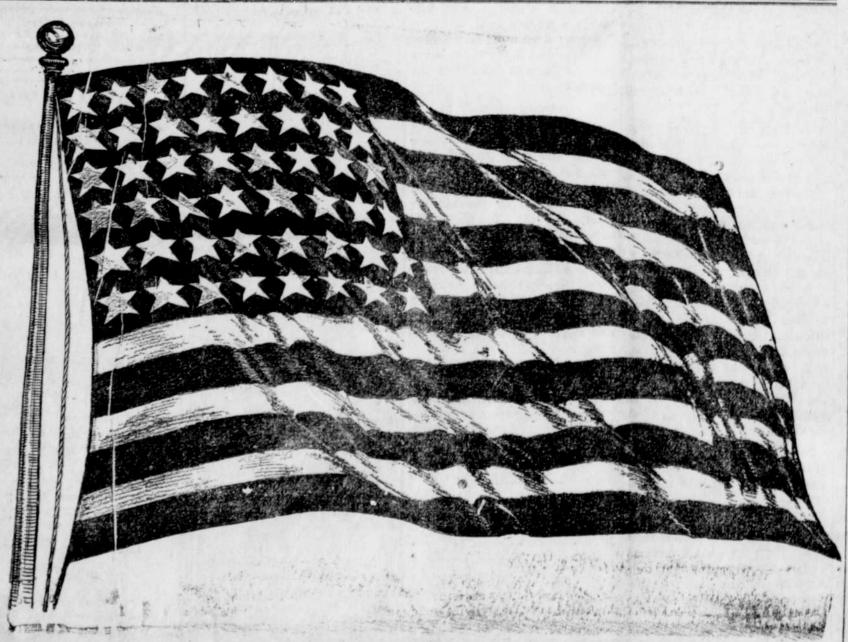
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