

THIS IS GEN. KING'S LATEST AND BEST STORY

Lanier of the Cavalry

Or,
A Week's Arrest

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By
GENERAL CHARLES KING,

Author of "The Colonel's Daughter,"
"Foes in Ambush," Etc.

A romance of army life in the Indian country in Indian fighting days! Lanier, the self-sacrificing hero who typifies Uncle Sam's military officers; Miriam, the sweet girl whose love he wins; Dora, the capricious little beauty who set a whole military encampment in a turmoil; Rawdon, young, misjudged, but honest, who was the rival of the evil officer Rafferty, a soldier of whom the service was well rid—these are only some of the characters that General King has drawn in the thrilling settings in the far west of bygone days when the Apaches and the Sioux waged war on the "pale-faces" in their last stand to save their hunting grounds. In this realistic narrative the humor compels laughter, the romance charms and the intrigue and tragedy thrill and grip the reader.

CHAPTER I.

THE sun was sinking low beyond the ford of the foaming Platte. The flag at the old fort on the neighboring height hung to the staff with scarcely a flutter, awaiting the evening salute of the trumpets and the roar of the sunset gun. The young girl pitched restlessly about the vine covered porch of the roadside cottage. She laid the big binocular aside, a wistful, longing look in the dark and dreamy eyes. Ever since stable call she had hovered about that shaded nook, again and again searching the northward slopes and ridges. Rawdon should have been here at her side—Rawdon, whom she had not seen for three mortal days—Rawdon, whom she had never set eyes on before the 1st of April and whom now she looked upon as the foremost soldier of the regiment, when in point of fact he was but a private trooper, serving the first part of his first enlistment.

This girl of seventeen, in her dainty white frock, plumped herself dejectedly down on the top step with two very shapely, slender, alighted feet displayed on the second below.

And then of a sudden the tears were dashed away and the girl sprang to her feet. A blithe voice hailed her from within.

"Dey's comin', Miss Dora—two on 'em, at least—like enough to be twin brudders."

Dora flew light as a bird to the other end of the little porch and was gazing out through the honeysuckles with all her soul in her eyes.

Coming up the slope at easy canter rode a young officer, with broad brimmed hat and dusty field dress, alert, slender, sinewy, of only medium height and not more than twenty-five years, with a handsome, sun-tanned, smiling face, and behind him came what Aunt Chloe, in her "darky" dialect had declared "the very spit of him"—a young trooper in similar slouch hat and dusty field dress, younger probably by three or four years, but to the full as alert and active, his face now all aglow with a light that was sweet for girlish eyes to see.

The leader swung his hat and blithely shouted as he curbed his eager horse. "Howdy, Miss Dora? Bless your heart, Aunt Chloe, I knew you'd have the buttermilk ready! No, Rawdon, I shan't dismount—this to the young orderly, who had sprung from saddle. "Father home, Miss Dora?" he went on cheerily.

"Over at the stables, Mr. Lanier," was the smiling answer. Trooper Rawdon had instantly swung once more into saddle and was reining back to his place.

"Stables going yet? I thought it supper time. Colonel sent me ahead to find him. Three of E troop horses act like they'd been eating loco weed."

"Colonel Button's always findin' some way of sendin' you in ahead, Marse Lanier," grinned Chloe. "Ah don't wonder dey says you can do anything you like an' never get hauled up for it."

"You're a gossip, auntie," laughed Lanier. "Rawdon, you dismount and wait for Dr. Mayhew in case I miss him. Give him the colonel's message and say the squadron should be in by 7:30." And, with a wave of his hand, he was off.

Then Chloe vanished opportunely. Dora, with glistening eyes and glowing cheeks, retreated within the shelter of the bowered porch. Then, bounding up the steps and turning with outstretched arms, thither Rawdon followed.

Ten minutes later at swift trot came a third horse and rider, the horse all that a cavalry horse should be in gait and build, the rider well up as marked in build and proportions. In front of the little cottage of the veterinary surgeon he hurriedly dismounted and strode, angering, through the gate. Dora, her face paling, met him at the head of the steps.

left, and in an instant the two men were face to face.

"Rawdon," spoke the newcomer, his tone curt, domineering, insolent, "what do you mean by letting an officer lead your horse to stables? Go you to yours at once! Take my horse, too, and groom him!"

Rawdon flushed to his forehead.

"My orders were from Lieutenant Lanier, sergeant, and they were distinctly to stop here."

"Go you at once and do as I say," was the instant rejoinder, and the veins in the sergeant's face were swelled almost to bursting.

"Indeed, Sergeant Fitzroy," began the girl reluctantly, "those were Lieutenant Lanier's orders."

"Hang Lieutenant Lanier's orders! No strapping sub can give such orders in this regiment. How dare you delay there? Go, you town skip, or I'll kick you through the—"

But now, with blazing eyes, Dora Mayhew threw herself in front of him. "If you raise hand or foot against Rawdon, Sergeant Fitzroy, it's the last time you come inside our gate. No, I'll not stand aside! Before you strike him you'll have to strike me!"

And then and there Sergeant Fitzroy realized that the fears and forebodings of the past month were more than grounded. If angered before he was maddened now. Brushing her light form aside with one sweep of his powerful arm, he sprang forward at the young soldier's throat just as a tall, lean man with grizzled beard, but athletic build, bounded up the steps and caught his wrist.

"None of that in my house, Fitzroy," came the order, stern and compelling. "In God's name, what does this mean? And, still grasping the sergeant's arm, the speaker backed the raging Englishman against the wooden pillar and held him there.

"Let go, Mayhew!" raved the sergeant. "I've ordered that young rip to stables, and he refuses to go."

"He was ordered to stay, papa, until you came," protested Dora, her eyes ablaze. "Lieutenant Lanier—that man's superior officer—gave him the colonel's message to you."

"He was ordered to go by Lieutenant Lanier's superior, the officer of the day, whom I represent," was Fitzroy's answer, "and the longer he stays the worse 'twill be for him."

"No officer ever authorized you to come to my quarters and lay violent hands on a man behaving like a gentleman, which you are not," was the cutting rejoinder of the older man, and it stung Fitzroy to fresh fury. Was he,

of the day, I came direct from him," was Fitzroy's final order. But it failed.

"Do nothing of the kind, Corporal Watts," said a quiet voice, at sound of which Sergeant Fitzroy whirled about and turned, if a possible thing, a full shade redder. There at the gate stood Lieutenant Lanier. There, a dozen yards away, but trudging fast as dignity would permit, came the officer of the day.

A jerk of the head to the corporal in response to his instant salute, and that young soldier, much relieved, strode away to join his men. Then Captain Curbit turned on Sergeant Fitzroy.

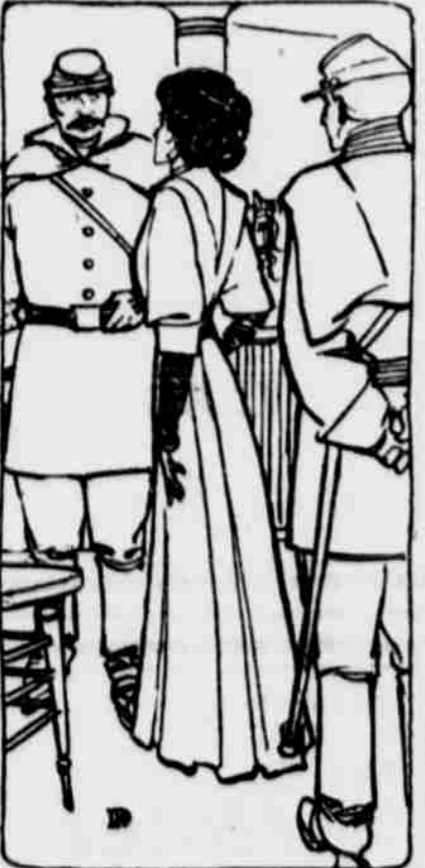
"You told me nothing of the facts in this case, sir. Lieutenant Lanier says he directed this man to wait here, with the colonel's message, while he rode to stables. Pardon me, Miss Dora. Come this way, sergeant."

And there was nothing for it but to obey. Abashed, humiliated, rebuked and in her presence, where he had looked but a moment before to humiliate and humiliate his rival, Fitzroy could only lift his hand in salute, follow the captain out of earshot and there make his plea as best he could, leaving Lanier and the silent young trooper, Dora and her grave faced old father, in possession of the field.

For a moment they watched Fitzroy. "He'll give you no more trouble, I fancy," said Lanier in low tone to the veterinarian. "I'll say good night again, Miss Dora." And he walked cheerily away, but Mayhew looked after him long and anxiously.

"Maybe not—maybe not," he muttered, with sorrowful shake of the head, "but few men can give more trouble than him when he's minded, and I reckon he's minded now."

(To Be Continued.)



"BEFORE YOU STRIKE HIM YOU'LL HAVE TO STRIKE ME!"

the model rider of the regiment, to be braved like this and in presence of the girl he loved?

"Let go! You must, Mayhew!" he hissed through clenched teeth. "You have no authority. You are only a civilian. You can be broke and fired if I report this—outrage—and what I know. Let go!" he shouted, freeing himself by furious effort. "Now, you, Rawdon, come with me. No. Stop! Corporal Watts!" he shouted to a non-commissioned officer swinging up the pathway toward the guardhouse on the bluff, four men of the guard at his back. "Come here and take charge of this man. It's the order of the officer of the day."

Corporal Watts slowly descended the incline, then, obviously embarrassed at the presence of Dora Mayhew, demanded further information.

By this time Rawdon, pale and silent, was standing at the foot of the steps. Too well he and other young soldiers had learned to know the weight of Sergeant Fitzroy's spite. Two officers were coming swiftly around the corner of the corral, Lanier foremost.

"I say again, Corporal Watts, this man is to be taken in charge at once. It is Captain Curbit's order as officer

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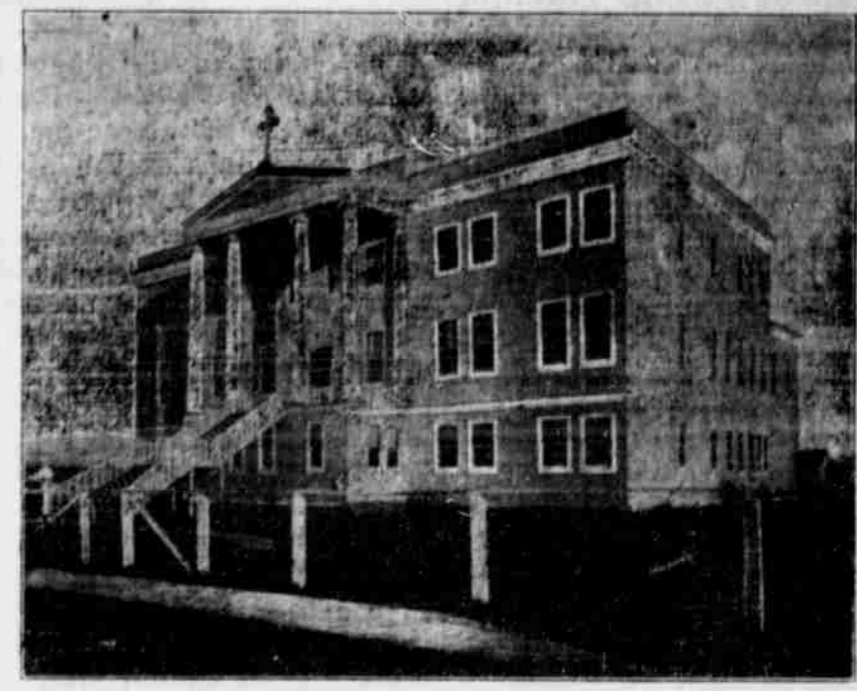
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