

## Liner of the Cavalry

By Gen. Chas. King

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

Nearly six long months went the regiment a-field on the hardest campaign of its history. Then at last by way of reward it had been ordered into big Fort Cushing for the winter. The new station was blithe and merry with Christmas preparations. Half a dozen fair visitors had come from the distant east. The band was good, the dancing men were many, the dancing floor was fine, and the dance they were having on Friday night, Dec. 16, was all that even an army dance could be until just after 11 o'clock. Then something happened to cast a spell over everybody.

Bob Lanier was officer of the guard. Bob had asked the colonel to let him turn over his sword to a brother officer, who, being in mourning, could not dance, and the colonel had curtly said no. The colonel's wife was amazed. Six girls were sorrowful, and one was cruelly hurt. She was under parental orders to start for home on the morrow. She liked Bob Lanier infinitely more than she liked her father's dictum that she must like him not at all. As for Bob Lanier, the garrison knew he loved her devotedly even before she knew it herself.

Of course she came to the dance. As the guest of Captain and Mrs. Sumter, she even had to go up and smile on the colonel and his wife, who were receiving. She and Kate Sumter had been classmates, roommates, at Vassar, and Kate, born and reared in the army, had never been quite content until her friend could come to visit the regiment—her father's home.

A winsome pair they were, these two "sweet girl graduates" of the June gone by, while the regiment was stirring up the Sioux on the way to the Big Horn and Yellowstone. Everybody had lavish welcome for them, and to Miriam Arnold the month at Fort Cushing had been quite a dream of delight until there came a strange and sudden missive from her father bidding her break off a visit that was to have lasted until February and all relations with Lieutenant Robert Ray Lanier.

For reasons of his own Mr. Lanier had made no avowal of his love to her, even though he had disclosed it to every one else. Bob had his enemies—frank men generally have. He could hardly believe the evidence of his ears when just after sunset roll call he had confidently approached the colonel with his request and had received the colonel's curt reply.

Everybody by half past 10 had heard of it. Nobody was very much surprised when in the midst of the lovely "Lorelei" waits a group of young officers near the doorway opened out, as it were, and Bob Lanier, officer of the guard, came gracefully gliding down the room, Miriam Arnold's radiant, happy face looking up into his. It was a joy to watch them dance together, but not to watch the colonel's face when he caught sight of them. Except Lanier every officer present was in full uniform, without his saber. Lanier was in the undress uniform of the guard, but with the saber—not the long, curved, clumsy, steel scabbarded weapon then used by the cavalry, but a light Prussian hussar sword that he had evidently borrowed for the occasion, for it belonged to Barker, the adjutant, as Barker realized to his cost when the commander summoned him.

"Mr. Barker, you will at once place Mr. Lanier in arrest for quitting his guard and disobeying my orders."

"I shall have to get my saber, sir," stammered the adjutant, meaning the regulation item over at his quarters.

"There it is, sir, before your eyes. Mr. Lanier, at least, can have no further use for it until a court martial acts on his case."

"Good Lord," thought Barker, "how can I go up to Bob and tell him to turn over that sword so that I can properly place him in arrest?"

But the colonel would brook no delay. "Direct Mr. Lanier to report to me in the ante-room," said he, marching thither forthwith.

Bob saw it coming in Barker's somber visage.

"Miss Arnold, may I offer myself as a substitute for the rest of this dance? Bob, the chief wants to see you a second," was the best that Barker could think of. They praised him

later for his "mendacity," yet what he said was true to the letter. It took little more than a second for the colonel to say:

"Mr. Lanier, go to your room in arrest."

Now, that was the first touch to spoil that memorable December night. The waltz soon ceased, but the colonel called for an extra and led out a lady from town, the wife of a future senator. "Keep this thing going," he cautioned his adjutant, but the piteous face of the girl he had left at the door of the ladies' dressing room and in the hands of Mrs. Sumter was too much for Barker.

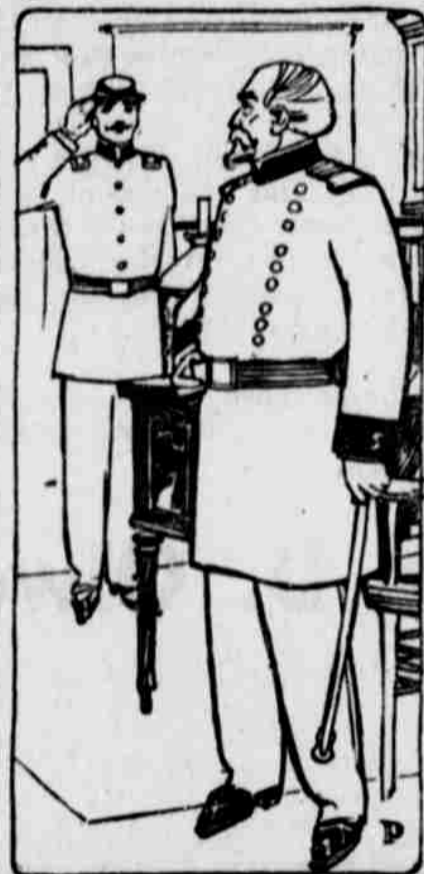
Colonel Button was hopping mad, yet at what? Lanier's offense had not been grave. It had happened half a dozen times that the officer of the guard, making his rounds and visiting sentries in the course of a dance evening, would casually drop in by one door and out by another, taking a turn or two on the floor perhaps—"just waltzing in and waltzing out," as the said.

"Disobeyed his orders flatly," suggested Captain Snaffle.

"Disobeyed no order," said Sumter as stoutly. "Simply did what many another has done, and nobody hurt. Nor would Lanier have been noted, perhaps, if he had not first asked to turn over his sword to Trotter."

Not ten minutes after Lanier went out, and went silent, but in unspeakable wrath, Paymaster Scott came dawdling in, and though but a casual visitor at the post, just back that day from a tour of the northward camps and forts along the Indian border, he saw at a glance that something had gone amiss. The colonel was laboriously waltzing; three or four couples were mechanically following suit, but most of the men were gathered about the buffet, and most of the women huddled at the dressing room door, and Scott, marching over to pay his respects to the colonel's wife, noted instantly the trouble in her serious face. Captain Snaffle was speaking with her at the moment. Mrs. Snaffle was at her side. "Why did they tell her at all?" Mrs. Snaffle was asking, with much spirit and obvious effort to control a racial tendency to double the final monosyllables. "Sure they might have known 'twould so-frighten the life out of her."

"So-frighten who?" asked Scott. Snaffle shot a warning glance at his wife.



"MR. LANIER, GO TO YOUR ROOM IN ARREST."

"It's Bobby Lanier, meejor, only you mustn't sp—refer—to it."

"Lanier? Oh, yes, I thought it was Bob I saw awhile ago streaking it across the parade. What's Bob got to do with frightening folk?"

"Something very unfortunate has happened, meejor," said Mrs. Button.

"Mr. Lanier was officer of the guard and asked to attend the dance, Mr. Trotter offering to take charge of the guard. Colonel Button felt compelled to decline, and—he came anyway. You know, of course, that couldn't be overlooked."

"H'm," said Scott gravely and reflectively. "And who is so frightened?"

"Miriam Arnold, a very charming girl who is visiting the Sumters. Indeed, it looks as though she cared for him. It's no secret that he's in love with her."

But at the moment Mrs. Sumter was seen coming forth from the dressing room. Half a dozen women were upon her at once with sympathetic inquiries. She came straightway to Mrs. Button.

"You will forgive my girls for not saying good night," she cordially spoke. "Miriam has been quite upset by a letter from home, and this little episode—this evening, which she cannot understand as we do, has so unstrung her that Mrs. Foster offered to send them over home in her sleigh. The side door had been barred, but Mr. Horton pried it open for them, so they had no need to come this way and face everybody—and explain."

"You know how sorry I am," said Mrs. Button. "Of course they are excusable for leaving as they did. Why, where are the others going?"

The music had suddenly stopped. Some one among the women, with startled eyes and paling face, sprang up saying, "It's fire." Almost at the same instant the colonel and Scott reached the veranda without. A dozen officers were there, intent and listening. "I tell you I heard it plainly," said one of their number, "and the Foster sleigh isn't back."

"Heard what, sir?" demanded the colonel. "What's the trouble?"

"A cry for help, or something, over yonder."

(To Be Continued.)

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Engineer of Forestry Bureau Stops the Study of Water Power in Order to Battle with the Flames in Vicinity of Prospect.

Engineer W. S. Herring of the forestry bureau arrived at Prospect Sunday night, having made a complete inspection of the district being swept by the forest fires raging around the upper Rogue River and Butte Creek district. He states that only rain will extinguish the flames which continue to devastate large areas of the finest timber in the district.

Mr. Herring states that the fire that has swept up the ridges has practically destroyed all the timber along them, but that it is making slower progress along the level benches. He estimates that 60 per cent of the damage done is on private holdings, and 40 per cent on the forest reserve. In the burnt districts probably an average of 60 per cent of the timber has been destroyed.

Strenuous efforts are being made to keep the fire from crossing Middle fork of the Rogue. Reports received Monday at Prospect stated that the flames had swept across the South fork, but were being held in check by the thirty-five men who are fighting the fire in that locality. The wind last Friday and Friday night gave the fires which were dying out, a fresh start. Mr. Herring states that they swept up the ridges, the flames leaping to a height of 300 feet in the air destroying everything in their path.

Mr. Herring was engaged in examining the water power possibility of all streams heading in the Cascades. He had reached the Rogue when the fires broke out, and since then has had charge of the battle with the flames.

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