

WHERE IS THE GIRL?

It does not seem so long ago Since we were girl and boy, And she came dressed in calico, And I in corduroy. The stone bridge where we used to meet Looks just the same to me— The girl? Ah, where is she?

I note few changes at the farm: The long shadows are wide; The rustic swing has lost its charm; There's little else beside That's altered since I was a boy, Except—I plainly see No pleasure's quite without alloy— The girl? Ah, where is she?

The cows come straying home at night; We drove them off of yore Home through the low sun's slanting light, Our shadows long before. Let them through the bars just now; It seems so strange to be Alone in urging that last cow— The girl? Ah, where is she?

It's twenty years ago to day Since Nell and I were wed, And, lured by fortune's restless sway, To city walks were led— And that reminds me I must send A check straight to Paree; For Nell is just a friend to spend— The girl? Ah, where is she?

R. L. Hendrick, in *Siftings*.



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I.—CONTINUED.

"Boots and saddles" had sounded at the artillery barracks. Mr. Pierce, as battery officer of the day, had clattered off through the north gateway. The battery had marched with dancing plumes and clanking sabers out to the stables and gun-shed. The horses of Lieuts. Doyle and Ferry were waiting for their riders underneath the gallery of their quarters. Capt. Cram, in much state, followed by his orderly bugler and guidon-bearer, all in full uniform, was riding slowly down the sunny side of the garrison, and at sight of him Doyle and Ferry, who were leisurely pulling on their gauntlets in front of their respective doors, hooked up their sabers and came clattering down their stairway; but no Waring had appeared. There, across the parade on the southern side, the bay colt, caparisoned in Waring's unimpeachable horse-equipment, was being led up and down in the shade of the quarters, Mr. Pierce's boy Jim officiating as groom, while his confere Ananias, out of sight, was at the moment on his knees fastening the strap of his master's riding-trousers.

highly unprofessional, sir. That'll do." And, so saying, he swung himself into the saddle, and, checking the bounds of his excited colt, rode calmly away to join the battery.

Already the bandsmen were marching through the north gate on the way to the broad open field in which the maneuvers were held. The adjutant, sergeant-major, and marksmen were following. Just outside the gate the post commander was seated on horseback, and Cram had reined in to speak with him. Now, in his blithest, cheeriest tones, Waring accosted him, raising his hand in salute as he did so:

"Good morning, colonel. Good morning, Capt. Cram. We're in luck to-day. Couldn't possibly have lovelier weather. I'm only sorry this came off so suddenly and I hadn't time to invite our friends out from town. They would have been so pleased to see the battalion—the ceremonies."

"H'm! There was plenty of time if you'd returned to the post at retreat yesterday, sir," growled old Braxton. "Everybody was notified who was here then. What time did you get back, sir?"

"Upon my word, colonel, I don't know. I never thought to look or inquire; but it was long after taps. Pardon me, though, I see I'm late in speaking." And in a moment he was riding quietly around among his teams and guns, narrowly scrutinizing each toggle, trace and strap before taking station midway between his lead drivers, and then, as Cram approached, reporting: "Left section ready, sir."

And the general had promised to come. This necessitated combined preparation, hence the order for full dress rehearsals with battery and all, and then came confusion. Fresh from the command of his beautiful horse battery and the dashing service with a cavalry division, Cram hated the idea of limping along, as he expressed it, behind a battalion of foot, and said so, and somebody told Brax he had said so,—more than one somebody, probably, for Brax had many an adviser to keep him in trouble. The order that Cram should appear for instruction in review of infantry and artillery combined gave umbrage to the battery commander, and his reported remarks thereupon, renewed cause for displeasure to his garrison chief.

"By the way, I promised Mr. Allerton that they should see that team of yours before they left; so, if you're no objection, the first morning you're on duty and can't go up, I'll take advantage of your invitation and drive Miss Allerton myself. Doesn't that court adjourn this week?"

"I'm afraid not," said Cram, grimly. "It looks as though we'd have to sit to-day and to-morrow both."

"Well, that's too bad! They all want to meet you again. Couldn't you come up this evening after stables? Hello! this won't do; our infantry friends will be criticising us; I see you're wearing gloves and I'm in gauntlets. So is

minutiae of the school of the battalion, explaining each movement before undertaking its execution. This was a matter he delegated to one of his senior captains. For weeks, therefore, in preparation for a possible visit on the part of the new brigadier general or his inspector, the six companies of the regiment stationed at the post had been fairly well schooled in the ceremonies of review and parade, and so long as nothing more was required of them than a march past in quick time and a ten minutes' stand in line all might go well. The general had unexpectedly appeared one evening with only a single aide-de-camp, simply, as he explained, to return the calls of the officers of the garrison, six or eight of whom had known enough to present themselves and pay their respects in person when he arrived in town. Braxton swelled with gratified pride at the general's praise of the spick-span condition of the parade, the walks, roads and visible quarters. But it was the very first old-time garrison the new chief had ever seen, a splendid fighting record with the volunteers during the war, and the advantage of taking sides for the union from a doubtful state, having conspired to win a star in the regular service only a year or two before.

"We would have had out the battery and given you a salute, sir," said Brax, "had we known you were coming; but it's after retreat now. Next time, general, if you'll ride down some day, I'll be proud to give you a review of the whole command. We have a great big field back here."

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"So far as we're concerned," said

Cram, who wanted to utilize the good

weather for battery drill, "we need no

instruction, as we have done the trick

time and again before; and if we

hadn't, who in the bloody Fifty-first

is there to teach us? Certainly not old

Brax."

All the same the order was obeyed, and Cram started out that loveliest of lovely spring mornings not entirely innocent of the conviction that he and his fellows were going to have some fun out of the thing before they got through with it. Not that he purposed putting any hitch or impediment in the way. He meant to do just exactly as he was bid; and so, when adjutant's call had sounded and the blue lines of the infantry were well out on the field, he followed in glittering column of pieces, his satin-coated horses dancing in sheer exuberance of spirits and his red-crested cannoneers sitting with folded arms, erect and statuque, upon the ammunition-chests. Mrs. Cram, in her pretty basket phaeton, with Mrs. Lawrence, of the infantry, and several of the ladies of the garrison in ambulances or afoot, had taken station well to the front of the forming line. Then it became apparent that old Brax purposed to figure as the reviewing officer and had delegated Maj. Minor to command the troops. Now, Minor had been on mustering and disbursing duty most of the war, had never figured in a review with artillery before, and knew no more about battery tactics than Cram did of diplomacy. Mounted on a sedate old sorrel, borrowed from the quartermaster for the occasion, with an antiquated, brass-bound Jenifer saddle, minus breast-strap and housings of any kind, but equipped with his better half's brown leather bridle, Minor knew perfectly well he was only a guy, and felt indignant at Brax for putting him in so false a plight. He took his station, however, in front of the regimental colors, without stopping to think where the center of the line might be after the battery came, and there awaited further developments. Cram kept nobody waiting, however; his leading team was close at the nimble heels of Capt. Lawrence's command as it marched gayly forth to the music of the band. He formed sections at the trot the instant the ground was clear, then wheeled into line, passed well to the rear of the prolongation of the infantry rank, and by a beautiful counter-march came up to the front and halted exactly at the instant that Lawrence, with the left flank company, reached his post, each caisson accurately in trace of its piece, each team and carriage exactly at its proper interval, and, with his crimson silk guidon on the right flank and little Pierce signaling "up" or "back" from a point outside where he could verify the alignment of the gun-wheels on the rank of the infantry, Cram was able to command "front" before little Drake, the adjutant, should have piped out his shrill "Guides posts."

But Drake didn't pipe. There stood all the companies at support, each captain at the inner flank, and the guides with their inverted muskets still stolidly gazing along the line. It was time for him to pipe, but instead of so doing there he stuck at the extreme right, glaring down towards the now immovable battery and its serene commander, and the little adjutant's face was getting redder and puffier every minute.

"Go ahead! What are you waiting for?" hoarsely whispered the senior captain.

"Waiting for the battery to dress," was the stanch reply. Then aloud the shrill voice swept down the line: "Dress that battery to the right!"

Cram looked over a glittering shoulder to the right of the line, where stood the diminutive infantryman.

For twenty-four hours old Brax had

been mad as a hornet. He was not much of a drill-master or tactician, but he thought he was, and it delighted him to put his battalion through the form of review, the commands for which he had memorized thoroughly and delivered with resonant voice and with all proper emphasis. "What he did not fancy, and indeed could not do, was the drudge-work of teaching the

battery had still its war allowance of horses—three teams to each carriage, lead, swing and wheel—and that brought its captain far out to the front of the sombre blue rank of foot: so far out, in fact, that he was about on line with Maj. Minor, though facing in opposite direction. Perfectly confident that he was exactly where he should be, yet equally determined to abide by any order he might receive, even though he fully understood the cause of Drake's delay. Cram promptly rode over to the guidon and ordered "right dress," at which every driver's head and eyes were promptly turned, but not an inch of a wheel, for the alignment simply could not be improved. Then after commanding "front" the captain as deliberately trotted back to his post without so much as a glance at the irate staff officer. It was just at this juncture that the bay colt came tearing down the field, his mane and tail streaming in the breeze, his reins and stirrups dangling. In the course of his gyrations about the battery and the sympathetic plunging of the teams some slight disarrangement occurred. But when he presently decided on a rush for the stables, the captain reestablished the alignment as coolly as before, and only noticed as he resumed his post that the basket phaeton and Mrs. Cram had gone. Alarmed, possibly, by the nonappearance of her warm friend Mr. Waring and the excited gambolings of his vagrant steed, she had promptly driven back to the main garrison to see if any accident had occurred, the out-comeant amusing himself in a game of fast-and-loose with the stable guard.

But hark!

What sound was that which broke upon his listening ear, faint and far off? And see, in yonder distant hut, half concealed by the rough bark door, a tiny flickering light! With sudden

start the wary guard made silent

progress to the spot. Half-afraid, he

cautiously ventured on, his mind

racked with doubts and fears for his

own safety. What could it mean, this

strange light at such an unholly hour?

And now he heard low voices in earnest converse and he paused in trepidation. A thousand thoughts flashed through his mind in one brief moment.

A plot, perchance, for murder and

plunder in its wake, was hatching in

the minds and hearts of the

treacherous Africans in yonder hut.

He knew not what dark schemes of rape

might not be going forward, and he

listened with bated breath while he

stepped into the friendly shadow of a

hut. A single crackling twig might

betray him to certain death, and he

thought of his wife and children with

aching heart. Then, with strained

ears, the night wind brought again that

sound half-suppressed which first arrested

his attention. A light rattle as if

arrows or deadlier weapons were being

prepared for carnage. Then the sense

of duty came floating back to him,

bringing renewed courage to his sinking

heart. He was on guard and on

him it devolved to surprise the conspirators, if such they were, ere it was too late.

Cautiously he moved forward toward

the hut whence the low voices and that

strange, mysterious rattle, awful in its

portent, still came at intervals. And

now he is just without the half-opened

door, kneeling on the ground and

eagerly straining every nerve to catch

a word from within. Suddenly the

sound came once again upon the still

night air and a low, hoarse voice whisper-

ed with half-suppressed excitement:

"Seven done, come a natural, dat

time, nigger. Fade you again for five

Gimme dem bones and come, little Joe,

for a point."

With starting eyes the guard still

listened while the answering voice came

back: "Can't do it, son. Two bits you

don't come. Five on the high side. Ha!

here's my seven."

With a look of pained surprise the

disappointed guard silently retraced his

steps from the crap game, only stop-

ping to mutter: "Blood will tell!"—Chi-

ago News.

BLOOD WILL TELL.

A Strange But Vicious Tale from the Midway Plaisance.

Midnight on the Plaisance. The long street lay wrapped in silence and shadow, deep and impenetrable. Light breezes from the great, heaving lake beyond stirred with a gentle touch the thatched roofs in the Dahomey village.

Away to the right lay the White City, glistening in the pale rays of the electric light. Above, the quiet stars kept silent watch over the slumbers of the nations. With slow and measured step the weary Columbian guard paced his lonely beat before the huts of the Africans, counting the weary hours till dawn would bring relief and rest.

Anon, he glanced about him at the village, the huts, strange and incongruous to western eyes, from which came no sound save the heavy and regular breathing of the sleeping Dahomeys.

All was silent. No night lamps glimmered in the tiny houses where Mor-

phus held sway.

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