AN ARMY OFFICER'S WIFE

by DORENCE KEENE

OCCASIONALLY something happens, and it usually happens in some forsaken portion of our United States or territories thereof, where civilization is not and murder and sudden death are most plentiful. Accordingly when that something happens somebody in Washington says things and somebody else does things—and behold, there spring up from somewhere sundry happily profane soldiery who carry civilization in their cartridges and progress at the point of the bayonet. For, in moments of stress, the viewpoint of the army is charmingly crude. Follows then a hysterical splurge. Also, sometimes, a congressional investigation, or mayhap garlands and honors and whatnots. It depends upon the circumstances—that is, the political circumstances.

THEY FOUND THEM

To the men of the army the garlands and frills are accepted with childish delight. Somewhere in the bottom of his well-drilled and cleanly heart there is the consciousness of having done a big thing well, and being most intensely human, he gives ear to the praise of his fellow citizen. And then again, garlands are few, while congressional committees are prolific. The army knows that it is impossible to explain to the gentleman from Long Island or Poughkeepsie, N. Y., that a little brown brother, hopping in and out of the brush, fanatically desirous of clawing up an American citizen with a poisoned bolo, has little regard for the federal statutes at large. And, of course, neither has Sammy, Jr., the uncommercial gentleman who has enlisted for reasons best known to himself and whose duty it is to catch the aforesaid Moro, and generally clear the path for those that follow after. Private Sammy does his work and he does it according to circumstances, which are essentially nonpolitical. Therefore it happens on occasionos that the aforesaid Moro is sent yelping into eternity and Sammy Jr. regards himself with a pleased grin. Also, circumstances force him to other untoward steps. Once there was a famous soldier, Mulvaney by name, who took the town of Lungtungpen, "naked as Vanus," and who, prior thereto, helped the department of information of the British empire, with the judicious administration of his cleaning rod. Which goes to show that between Private Sammy and Private Tommy there is a healthy Anglo-Saxon understanding—particularly as regards the treatment of black and brown brothers.

All this is merely preamble, but when the Moro has been carted away and the congressional committee has committed itself and the garlands are forgotten Private Sammy goes back to his own life, which to him is a highly important affair. Somewhere, somehow, there remains in his brain an impression that he is allowed the pursuit of happiness—and he pursues it. He does it in his own way and in divers places. The turbulent tides of Juan de Fuca, which race by the gun-crested heights of Fort Worden, have heard his raucous chorus; the watermelon patches dotting the desolation of Fort Riley know his footprint. On a Florida sandspit, in the snows of Alaska, in the heat of the islands, he pursues it—and catches what little there is of it.

The world which praises and abuses him knows him not, nor his life. The point of view is entirely different. A ponderous civilian at the window of the paying teller of a local bank observed an officer in uniform standing behind him.

"Well, I guess the country is safe," observed the rotund one, gazing superciliously at the uniform.

"Thank you, sir," said the officer, saluting.

This officer was a boy lieutenant, and his sarcasm was natural. For within his short space of years he had played with the fangs of death and made snooks at the powers of darkness. A short time previously, at Luzon, he was ordered to find the bodies of two soldiers that had been murdered. The orders were to find the bodies, so of course they went and did. With seven troopers and a surgeon he pursued his way through jungle scrub and cholera infested lands, without food, drenched with rain, sleeping in swamps. They found them. One was tied alive over a red-ant hill, after being slashed with a bolo, and the other had been knifed and gagged with a portion of his own flesh. Presumably the supercilious circumferential gentleman did not know of such things and—this is what stings—there seem to be so many citizens of the country whose ideas of the work of the army is equally limited. Unfortunately, the men who do big things cannot talk about them.

It follows that what the man of the army has to undergo, so must the woman of the army. The outside world knows the army woman as she is not. It sees in her life a succession of society events and realizes not the horrible other side. Here is an illustration:

Some years ago, in "the days of the empire," a little army woman went as a bride with her doctor husband to Manila. They were ordered at once to a native village up the valley, where a company of infantry had been stationed to guard the water supply for Manila. The natives, you see, had a habit of throwing the bodies of victims of cholera into the rivers and wells, thereby making life most unpleasant for those whites who had to drink. Such things are not mentioned in the society reports of the press.

Of course the wife could have remained behind, but she did not. She was possessed with the archaic belief common to the army that the place of the wife is by her husband. So with him she plunged through the jungle to the camp. She was the first white woman in the place and the only other one of her kind was 20 miles away. The situation was decidedly pleasant. The house was like an inverted waste-paper basket, a three-roomed bamboo shack set up on bamboo poles. One room was dubbed the centipedorium because—well, because every time the bride went in it she found centipedes and other things. There were other advantages. There was no stove and the cooking had to be done over hot coals. Also the water had to be boiled and parboiled; not alone the water for drinking purposes, but also for washing.

SHE WAS THE FIRST WHITE WOMAN IN THE PLACE

"There was so much cholera," she explained.

The meals were served with wire nettings over the dishes and above and about them and around them was the one thought—cholera. There were other delights. The Moros were out. A sentry had been boloed. The roads were knee deep in mud and the rain poured down in torrents.

There came a night when the very soul of her was tried to its uttermost. The rain had fallen ceaselessly. Pools were under the house and cholera was unusually on the rampage. The rain came down in such gusts that she had to fasten down the windows, thereby making the house too dark for reading purposes. So the day long, while her doctor husband wandered about through mud and rain with chlorodyne in hand, she peered through the slats, gazing at the bamboo palmtrees whipping to and fro before the fury of the storm. At the appointed time she prepared dinner. She produced her row of cans. In her girlhood days there was a household joke, "What we cannot eat we can." Now as she gazed at the canned milk, the canned butter and the canned meats she wondered if she could eat all they can. Somehow or other the fleeting thought of the girlhood days made her choke. You see it was the rain and the storm and the centipedes and things which got on her nerves.

Her husband came in for dinner and rushed away again. Whereupon little Mrs. Army Woman went to her trunk and for the first time unpacked all the finery of the days that had been.

"I found a dress which I had worn at a dance at the Presidio the last time," she said, "and I cried and I cried—"

Before leaving, the husband had pushed a chest against the door, locking her in completely, this being deemed the safest plan. Therefore on leaving he had to crawl through the window, and as he hung on the window sill she bent forward and kissed him. Then she heard him drop with a splash into the disease infested pools below. Altogether it was as nice a spot for the pursuit of happiness as could be found.

Then she went to the loneliness and the dark and the centipedes and cried. The wind whipped the banana palms against the house, the rain slashed down, she heard the lizards scudding around and a big one outside, in a mango tree, called "tuck-coo" so that she jumped up in fear and alarm waiting and wondering.

All through the night she lived the horrors.

"I FOUND A DRESS WHICH I HAD WORN AT A DANCE AT THE PRESIDIO"

The storm passed and there followed the silences, weird, uncanny, of dripping water, of moving things underfoot. Ultimately she heard the splashing of kindly American boots, and looking outside saw a wet specimen of Private Sammy, marching philosophically up and down on sentry go. She called to him, half hysterical, and he answered her with cheering words. Reassured, she waited for her husband's appearance, wrapped in an army blanket, chilled to the heart. Later, when her husband and daylight had come, she learned that she had been sitting opposite a window with a lighted candle by her, offering a splendid mark for the prowling Filipino sharpshooters.

This was an experience and one which the fat gentleman in the bank had never imagined. To the army this ignorance and narrowness is incomprehensible. The agony and bloody sweat of hiding death had gripped him so often that Private Sam cannot understand why the gentlemen who employ him for this class of work do not realize that there are particular horrors connected with it. Being of the army, he does not speak of them, but his gorge rises within him when fat gentlemen sneer at the uniform which he has made respected.

But he remembers the pursuit of happiness and the day comes when he is ordered home. Then it is that the army and its women, gathered aft, watch the walls of Manila fade from their vision. The crowding thoughts chase each other across their brains, forming themselves into memories, horrible and happy, of cholera and poisoned bolo, of the perfume of the ihlang-ihlang and the love flourishing while the constabulary band played songs of home, around the the Luneta.—San Francisco Call.

Romance of the Sweet Pea

The most highly regarded and widely grown annual in Canadian gardens of today, no matter where in this flower-loving country the garden be, or whether it belong to cottager or man of means, toiling clerk or park-owning municipality, the sweet pea first came to us from the Sicilian nuns.

Franciscus Cupani, a monk, who was also a botanist, sent the first seeds to England in the year 1699, consigned to an Enfield schoolmaster named Dr. Uvedale. The old Middlesex dominie was both a botanist and horticulturist, and he grew the first sweet peas ever seen in England.

Cupani called the plant Lathyrus distoplatyphyllus hirsutis, mollis et odorus—an unwieldy name, out of all harmony with the winged grace of the sweet pea. Later Linnaeus cut down the clumsy designation to its present form of Lathyrus odoratus.

Dr. Uvedale found the seeds produced a plant with purple flowers, and so here we have the color of the original sweet pea.

The stock was gradually multiplied, and about thirty years later one Robert Furber, a Kensington gardener, was the first to offer seeds for sale.

Progress in the production of new varieties was slow in those remote days, and it was not until the year 1793 (nearly a century later than Cupani's consignment of seeds) that any new colors became known. In the year mentioned, however, a catalogue was issued, which described black, scarlet and white varieties.

What became of the black and scarlet sorts, if they ever existed in those true colors, is not known. The black must have been a deep purple. The blackest bloom is still the dark purple Tom Bolton. In this connection, seeing that for years past hybridists have been trying to produce a pure yellow sweet pea, it may be said that the yellowest bloom at present known is the creamy Clara Curtis.

A novelty in the form of a striped flower was offered in the year 1837 by Mr. James Carter, and in the year 1860 there appeared the first bloom of the choice picotee-edged varieties which are so popular today. The latter was raised by Major Trevor Clarke. It was a fine white flower with an edging of blue, and Major Clarke scored a double triumph, for his new flower was also the first sweet pea with blue coloring.

The greatest revolution in the history of the sweet pea, however, was inaugurated on July 25, 1901, when, at the National Sweet Pea society's first exhibition, held in the old Royal Aquarium, London, Mr. Silas Cole, Earl Spencer's gardener at Althorp park, displayed the famous Countess Spencer, a beautiful pink variety with a wavy instead of the conventional smooth standard. The loveliness of the new form won the hearts of all growers at once and during the last ten years so great has been the increase of wavy or frilled varieties after the Spencer type that the latter now rules the sweet pea world.

Some hybridists are engaged particularly at present in adding to the list of marbled varieties, of which the blue-veined Helen Pierce is so choice an example, and it is possible that much more effort may be expended in future in the attempt to produce flowers with a striking and delicate venation.

Just a few figures in conclusion, showing not the least striking phase of the romance of the sweet pea. The Sicilian monk's ponderously named plant has become about 500 different varieties grouped into 21 classes, according to color. Over the culture of these flowers a national society numbering 938 members and mebracing 101 affiliated societies watches.

THE NEW COUNCIL OF MONACO

Members Elect Each Other to a Good Thing and the Political Boss Is Unknown.

Paris.—A few Americans who happened to be visiting the principality of Monaco at the time when it was struggling with its first elections had an exceptional opportunity to enjoy themselves.

Some months ago Monaco suddenly woke up one morning with a thirst for parliamentary government and marched upon the prince's palace. A revolution was averted by the prince consenting to receive a deputation, to whom he said: "If you want to elect each other to something, by all means do so," or words to that effect.

The Monegasques accordingly elected each other to a body which they called the communal council, after going through all the proper formalities of shouting and spellbinding. The body electorate at once split up into four distinct parties, the real Monegasques, the true Monegasques, the Monaco patriots and the Progressive Nationalists of Monaco. The last-named party came out at the top of the polls and holds the majority in the communal council.

Old Fortified Entrance to Monaco.

The prince has granted the council supplies amounting to $200,000 a year. The question before the council, improbable as it may seem, is what to do with the money. Every public expenditure is covered already several times over by the profits of the Monte Carlo gambling tables. The council's budget, therefore, will work out something like this: Annual revenue, $200,000; expenditure, nil.

The day of the political boss has not yet dawned in Monaco, but it will probably come, and then there may be some modification in the unique balance sheet.

POSTCARD THREE FEET LONG

Largest Ever Sent Through the United States Mail—Carried as Outside Mail.

Austin, Tex.—A postcard which weights four pounds was received through the mail by an Austin firm of attorneys a few days ago. The card is said to be the largest ever sent through the United States mails. It is 38 inches wide and 26 inches long. It was mailed at Enid, Okla., and the sender was Isaiah Armond. He had the card made to order. It required $1.28 postage to carry it. The sum was all made up of one-cent stamps which were pasted on the upper right-hand corner of the card.

Postcard Weighing Four Pounds.

Owing to its enormous size this unusual piece of mail matter could not be placed in a mail sack, so it had to be carried to Austin as outside mail.

To Aid Chicago's Blind.

Chicago.—There is a little whistle in use in Chicago which is as effective in making a way through the crush at the street corners as that employed by the members of the traffic squad. The privilege of using it is a recent one extended to the blind persons of the city as the result of the efforts of an organization which is devoted to their interests.

The police department, in granting it, stipulated that the signal whistles should have a tone which would distinguish them readily from those used by the men of the traffic squad. At the sound of the flute-like signal the officer at a busy corner leaves his post and goes to the curb to assist the blind person, or perhaps two or three, to cross the street.

WHAT HE CONSIDERED FAIR

Mr. Olsen's Offer Must Have Come As Surprise Even to Persuasive Claim Agent.

Up in Minnesota Mr. Olsen had a cow killed by a railroad train. In due season the claim agent for the railroad called.

"We understand, of course, that the deceased was a very docile and valuable animal," said the claim agent in his most persuasive claim-agentlemanly manner, "and we sympathize with you and your family in your loss. But, Mr. Olsen, you must remember this: Your cow had no business being upon our tracks. Those tracks are our private property and when she invaded them she became a trespasser. Technically speaking, you, as her owner, became a trespasser also. But we have no desire to carry the issue into court, and possibly give you trouble. Now, then what would you regard as a fair settlement between you and the railroad company?"

"Vall," said Mr. Olsen slowly, "Ay baen poor Swede farmer, but Aye shall give you two dollars."—Everybody's.

Wrong Guess.

It was exhibition day at No. 3, and as the parents of Jack Grady, the dullest pupil, were listening hopefully, the teacher tried her best to help the boy. "How did Charles I. of England die?" she asked, assigning the easiest question on her list to Jack. As he looked at her, with no indication of a coming answer, the teacher put her hand up to her neck. Jack saw the movement and understood its meaning, as he thought. "Charles I. of England died of cholera," he announced briskly.—Youth's Companion.

She Probably Could.

Senator La Follette, apropos of certain scandals, said at a dinner in Madison: "These things recall the legislator who remarked to his wife, with a look of disgust: 'One of those land lobbyists approached me today with another insulting proposition.'

"The wife, a young and pretty woman, clapped her hands. 'Oh, good!' she cried. 'Then I can have that sable stole, after all, can't I, dear?'"

So They Say.

Stranger—I say, my lad, what is considered a good score on these links?

Caddie—Well, sir, most of the gents here tries to do it in as few strokes as they can, but it generally takes a few more.—Scottish American.

Her Tribute.

Randall—How did you like the military parade, Ida?

Miss Rogers—Glorious! I never saw enough men in all my life before.—Harper's Bazar.

When a man dresses like a slouch it's a pretty good sign that he either ought to get married or get divorced.

A woman hates her enemies longer than she loves her friends.