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A. R. POST, NO. 86. The Gen. John O'Neill Post, No. 86, Department of Nebraska G. A. R., will meet the first and third Saturday evening of each month in Masonic hall O'Neill

ELKHORN VALLEY LODGE, I. O. O. E. Meets every Wednesday evening in Odd Fellows' hall. Visiting brothers cordially invited to attend. W. H. MASON, N. G. C. L. BRIGHT, Sec.

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Regular communications Thursday in a crobefore the full of the moon.

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HOLT-CAMP NO. 1710, M. W. OF A. Meets on the first and third Tuesday in each month in the Masonic hall.
NEIL BRENNAN, V. C. D. H. CRONIN, Clerk

O, U. W. NO. 153, Meets second and fourth Tudsday of each month in Masonic hall. C. Bright, Rec. S. B. Howard, M. W.

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Lambert. "Any of the men could have

gone, I suppose."
"Well, sir, the trouble is that he'd have had to send the men on muleback, or else pay their fares over on the cars. The captain has a pass, and it doesn't cost him anything; and he's afraid to let the mule be gone over night. It's mighty easy losin' 'em among all these niggers, and they might charge it up against the captain's pay. The captain has stuck close to camp so far as these night posses have been concerned, but he'd hunt the whole state for a !ost blanket or bayonet. And he always goes alone-and gets what he's after, and he's had no trouble worth mentionin'; but that fellow Potts was impudent to him to-day, and he was slow 'bout seein' it at first; now, though, he's got his mad up and gone over there to get the mule and satisfaction both; that's what I'm afraid of, sir. He lashed Parmeleee to-day for bein' a coward, and—beggin' your pardon, lieutenant—though the captain aint much on mil-

itary, he fires up like a flash at anything like insult to the flag." "Do you think it advisable to send after the captain?" asked Lambert, after a moment's reflection.

"There's no way we can send, sir, cept afoot or behind a four-mule team in an army wagon. We only had that one saddle mule."

Lambert stepped to the tent door and looked out. The sky was overcast and the darkness thick. A wind was rising and whirling the sparks from the cook fire over by the road, and from the pipes of the men sitting smoking and chatting in little groups about camp. Some had



come to him at nightfall and sought permission to go in to the village, and he had felt obliged to refuse. After the events of the day it seemed wisest to hold them at camp, and he had so informed Sergt. Burns. As he stood there now looking uneasily about, first at the dark threatening sky, then at the darker shadows about camp, Lambert thought he caught sight of three or four forms, vague and indistinct, hurrying along the bank beyond the fire.

"Who are those men?" he asked. "I don't know, sir. I warned the company to remain in camp. I'll see." And Burns turned quickly and made a run for the opposite end of the company grounds. Some of the men started up and stood gazing expectantly after him, and the chat and laughter suddenly ceased. The shadowy forms had dis appeared; so, by this time, had Burns. Then there came the sound of his powerful voice, out by the road:

"Halt there, you men! Come back here!"

Then followed a rush and scramble in the bushes, and the sound of foot-falls, rapid and light, dying away in the darkness. Then some low laughter and comment among the men. Then Burns came back, and, without waiting to report, sternly ordered: "Fall in!"

Knocking the ashes out of their pipes and buttoning their overcoats-a thing they might have overlooked before the lesson of the day-the soldiers slowly obeyed the unusual summons. Burns got his lantern and quickly called the roll. Four men failed to respond. Leaving the company still in line, the sergeant hastened to the tents for the absentees. Two of the number were found placidly sleeping. Two were away entirely—Privates Riggs and Murphy.

"If I'm not mistaken I saw three shadows," said Lambert, as the sergeant made his report. "What would the captain do if he were here?—send a patrol? "The captain never had a night roll-

call, sir; but he wouldn't send a patrol. That's only a good way of not ketchin' men, unless they're too drunk to run. It wouldn't be of much consequence, only for that man Riggs bein' one of 'em. He's a troublesome case. If the lieutenant approves of it, I'll sent Sergt. Watts and a couple of good men without arms. They can find whoever's out. What I don't like about it is that somebody jumped the fence into the Walton place.

"The old homestead across the road?" "Yes, sir. There's been some trouble between the captain and the Walton family. He ordered the men never to ... for the belosure on any or text, the

old lady made such a row 'bout it." "Who lives there? Surely they ought to welcome our sending responsible men over to drive off our renegades."

"Well, I don't know 'bout that, sir," aid the sergeant, with a nervous laugh. 'If there's anybody on earth the cape's a terror. Nothin' of the unproceted female about her, sir, though she and her daughters live alone there. Both her sons were shot during the war; one was killed, and the other's in Havana -or Mexico; said he'd never surrender. and won't come home. I reckon they're pretty hard up there, sometimes, but you should see how the old lady rides it over the captain, sir. I wonder she hasn't been over to pay you a visit. Shall I send after Riggs and Murphy, sir? It's like sendin' good money after bad. They haven't a cent, either of 'em, and if town was their object there's no use in their goin'; nobody would trust'em."

Then came interruption—the sound of a horn, on ordinary tin horn, too, floating through the dark and muttering

"That's her, lieutenant. That's the old lady herself. She reads prayers reg'larly at half-past nine every night, and some of the niggers are out yet. They used to have a conch shell that sounded pretty, but Parmelee said they had to sell it. They've had to sell pretty much everything, tryin' to keep

Again the sound of the cheap and despised tin. Lambert recalled it as a necessary concomitant of the street boy and straw rides about the Christmas holidays, and its summons, he thought, was never to prayer; it called for many a lively malediction.

"Send Sergt. Watts, if you think it advisable," said he, briefly. "I'm going up on the road a moment."

Again the blast of the horn, short, staccato, imperative, and then an impatient, querulous voice at the north end of the porch—a voice calling: "You, Elinor! you wuthless black gadabout! wh' ah you?"

And as Lambert scrambled up the steep path and reached the road another voice, low, tremulous, eager, close at hand, whispered: "Oh, I thought you'd never come! Hyuh! quick! Leave the money, shuah, and the pail, t'maw'ow night."

And then, with a rustle of feminine garments, bending low, a slender, girlish form shot across the beam of lamplight falling from an east window. Another form, also feminine, scurried away from the hedgerow and something came rolling out into the roadway, clinking against the stones. There was sound of voluble reprimand and flustered explanation at the north end of the building, a quick, kitten-like patter of little feet up the rickety old steps in front and in an instant the girlish form seemed perched on the window sill. There a second or two it hovered,

motionless, until a door slammed around at the north side of the house. Then in popped the slender figure, out went the light, and but for the sigh and complaint of the night wind in the rustling branches of the old trees about the veranda all was silence at Walton

VII.

It was after ten when Capt. Close returned, and barely 11 when he again set forth. This time a sergeant and ten picked men went with him, nobody but Close knew whither. "I may be gone two days, lieutenant," said he, in the laborious use of the title which among regulars "to the manor born" had long been replaced by "Mr.;" and had not Lambert asked for instructions none probably would have been given. Of his adventures during the day he said not a word. He brought back the mule, and that was enough. The first thing Lambert and Burns knew of his return was the sound of his voice at the wagon, informing the guard that he wanted coffee and something to eat. Then, paying only vague attention to Lambert's congratulations on his safe return, he told Burns to get a detachment ready at once, then dissppeared within the dark interior of his tent, leaving Lambert standing in some embarrassment and chagrin outside. "Looking to see if his strong box is all safe," whispered the first sergeant, as he came up. "It's under the boards-under his cot-and he never lets anybody come in, not even the mar-

It was full five minutes before the captain reappeared. He struck no light meantime, but could be heard fumbling around in the darkness. When he came forth he had some papers in his hands. 'We'll go to your tent, sergeant," he said. "Your desk is handier. How've you got along, lieutenant?" "Two men are out, sir; Riggs and

Murphy-" "Dam blackguards, both of 'emspecially Riggs; almost the oldest soldier in the company, too," said Close, wrathfully, seating himself at the desk and beginning to arrange the papers for signature.

"I had been told I should find some splendid old oaks among the rank and

file," hazarded Lambert, after a pause and thinking his commander should give some directions in the case.

"Old oaks? Old soaks, most like," was the disdainful answer-" 'specially Riggs. He come from the cavalry. Why, I've had them two fellows tied up by the thumbs three times since last March; and it hain't hurt 'em no more'n if they were cast iron. Better keep a guard over the mules while I'm away, sergeant-or, rather, lieutenant; you see, I ain't use to havin' anybody but the sergeant. Oh! Now 'bout them mileage papers o' yourn. You said not to send 'em. Why not?"

"You've made out a charge of some sixty-five dollars for transportation of a servant, sir; I brought no servant with me.

"What's the difference? The law 'lows it. Every officer's entitled to a servant. And if he does his own work he's entitled to what the servant would get. You didn't black your boots on the way, did you? You had a servant do it. He was with you on the trainporter of the sleeping-car, wasn't he? I never go in the durn things myself, but you did, I'll warrant. Well, you paid him out of your pocket, every time you changed cars or boat.'

"That may be, sir; but I can't sign any such claim as sixty dollars for transportation of servant when I paid no such sum."

"Then how're you to get your money back?-the dimes and dollars you've given to porters and waiters on the way? Every officer I know would sign that certificate without question, and every quartermaster would pay it. Capt. Warren came with you to headquarters, at least. What d'you bet he hasn't drawn servant's transportation You think it over, lieutenant. There's no sense in you robbin' yourself this way. Write down to barracks, 'f you like, and see what they say at headquarters. They'll tell you just what

"I'll sign the accounts without that and get the mileage for myself," said Lambert. "I need the money. Then if it's allowable and proper I can collect for servant later."

"Not much you can't. There's where you show your ignorance. Then the government would make you fight ten years for it, even if you'd brought a servant with you. The way is to get it first and let them stop it if it's wrong But here, I can't fool away time ar guin' simple thing like that. I've got to be miles away before midnight, and, no matter who comes and inquires, you don't know where we've gone. Now you won't need any commissary funds or anything while I'm away. Just pay cash and take receipts if you buy vegetables for the company."

"You forget, sir, that my money's gone.

"Sure you hadn't anything but what was in that pocketbook? Then, ser-

geant, you do it, and keep account."
"But, excuse me, captain," said Lambert, flushing, "I myself will need money. I must find some place to board. Keep those mileage accounts as security, if you like, but let me have twenty dollars-

"But you hain't signed them; they're no good."

"I'll settle that," said Lambert, sharply; and, taking a pen, he drew a line through the item for transportation for servant and altered the figures of the total accordingly, then, still standing and bending over the desk, slashed his signature with a sputtering pen upon the paper. Close carefully scrutinized the sheet, compared it with its duplicate when that, too, was similarly finished, and stowed both away in a long envelope. "Sure you've got to have twenty?" he asked, as a soldier stuck his head inside the tent door, retired precipitately at sight of the junior lieutenant, and then, from without, announced that the captain was served "Well, I guess I can get it for youbefore I go." Slowly he finished, slowly signed, after close study of their contents, the papers placed before him, then slowly left the tent without another word. Not until he had buckled on his pistol belt-he carried no sword -and was about to start with his silent and yawning squad, did he seem to wake from his fit of abstraction, and then only when Lambert appealed to him for orders.

"Oh, yes. Well, just have an eye on them mules, will you, lieutenant? Everything else, almost, is under lock and key. The quartermaster sergeant is pretty solid."

"But in case of disturbance, or de mands for more detachments, or men wanting to go away?"

"There won't be nuthin' now fur a week. Do's you like about givin' the men a little liberty. They've had a good deal. Everything around here will be quiet enough, and you'll hear what I'm after-well, when I've got it."

That night, though worn and weary and downhearted, Lambert could hard ly sleep. At 11 the little detachment had trudged away into the blackness of the night, and the tramp of their march was swallowed up in the rustle of the crisp brown foliage and the creak of overhanging branches. The men remaining in camp crawled back to their blankets; the cook fire smoldered away, only occasionally whirling forth a reluctant flight of sparks in response to some vigorous puff of the restless wind; the sentry yawned and dawdled about the wagon and the store tent; even the mules seemed so sympathetic with their recovered associate that no whisper of a bray came from their pen on the bank of the stream. Lambert had received the assurance of his sergeant that the missing men would surely turn up be fore breakfast on the morrow, and had given permission to that harassed and evidently disgusted official to go to bed. Then, after a turn around his sleeping camp, the young fellow went to his lonely roost "to think things over."

In the first place, as he lighted his candle, there was the tin pail which had rolled out from the Walton hedge row, and which, on inspection, he had found to contain about two pounds of fresh butter, very neatly packed in lettuce



leaves. That proved that the Waltons still had something of their old garden left. Lettuce could surely be raised only under glass at this inclement season. He had hitherto had no time for close inspection of the contents. Now as he turned over the leaves he found a little slip of paper on which, in a girlish and somewhat "scratchy" hand, were penned the words: "Please send small currency. It's hard to get change. You can have buttermilk to-morrow night if you'll bring a pitcher. Due, \$5.10. You must pay it this time. I must have it."

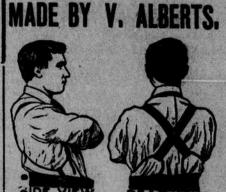
"Now, who on earth is this young lady's customer?" thought Lambert. "Surely not Close. He never spends a cent on butter. Nobody else lives nearer than Parmelee's to the north or town to the south. Can it be that some of the sergeants have been buying supplies from this quarter and running up a butter bill?" Burns had spoken of trouble between the captain and the old lady. and of all hands being forbidden to enter the Walton grounds on any pretext whatever. That, of course, did not prohibit the men from buying what the Walton servants offered for sale outside the fence, and if they were so straitened in circumstances they might be glad to find a market for their supplus produce even among the Yankee invaders, provided Mme. Walton were kept in ignorance of the traffic. She was uncompromising. No intercourse with, no recognition of, the barbarians, was her rule to kith and kin, and the few negroes who still hung about the crumbling old place repeated her words with the fear born of long-continued discipline under her roof and rod in the days of their enforced and unquestioning servitude.

These and other items of information as to his surroundings the young lieu-tenant had obtained from Sergt. Burns in the course of their evening watch together. He had no other means of studying the situation, and was but one of many new and comparatively inex-perienced officers thrown upon their own resources at isolated posts among "the states lately in rebellion." Not yet 24 hours on duty with his company, he had been ordered to proceed with an armed force to the succor of officers of law supposably besieged by a rebellious mob, and now, at midnight, in the heart of a strange country and far from the heart of its people he was commanding officer of his company and camp, without definite instructions of any kind and only his native common sense to guide him.

Lambert has since told two women -his wife and his mother-how his thoughts wandered back to the peaceful old homestead in the far northland, and to the teachings of his boyhood days. He made a sturdy fight against the feeling of loneliness that oppresse him. He wished the wind did not blow so sulkily, in such spiteful, vicious puffs. It seemed as though nature had combined with old Lady Walton to give him ungracious welcome to this particularly shady side of the sunny south. The wind itself was whispering sarcastic and withering remarks to him, like those the sergeant repeated as coming from Madam Walton to the defenseles captain; and even Burns' sense of subordination could not down his impulse to chuckle over some of them. What would Lambert do or say if the prim and starchy dame were to call upon him, as she occasionally had on his superior, driving him at last to the refuge of the nethermost depths of his tent, whence, as Burns declared, "the captain couldn't be induced to come out till the old lady was back inside her own door?"

The last time he "tied up Riggs"a punishment much resorted to in the rough war days and those that closely followed them, especially by those offi cers who were themselves graduated from the ranks or the volunteers-it was for trespass on the Walton place. The fellow had climbed the fence and was pilfering among the old fruit trees when caught by Madam Walton. That was bad enough, but he had been impudent to her, which was worse. The men themselves would probably have ducked him in the stream-the old, self-respecting soldiers, that is-had the captain not ordered his summary punishment. Lambert was wondering what steps he should take in the interests of discipline, when he finally blew out his candle, determined, if a possible thing, to get to sleep. It was just a quarter-past 12 when he wound his watch and stowed it under his rude pillow. His revolver, the day's purchase, lay, with some matches, close at hand. He had even placed his sword and belt at the foot of his cot. (To be continued.)

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