

Captain Brabazon

BY B. M. CROKER

A Military Romance of South Africa

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

Four days later the Portugal had cast anchor just outside the bar of Durban, and the marchers were at the end of their voyage—all but the two miles which intervened between them and the shore. It was too late to disembark or do anything that evening, although boats with dispatches were soon alongside. After dinner Miles came up on deck for a smoke, rested his arm on the bulwarks and gazed on the scene before him. Although it was night, it was not dark; the sky was lit up with millions and millions of stars, that seemed closer and brighter than in our own Northern region. The troop ship lay just outside the bar, and a fine bay, evidently fringed with trees; at one extremity blazed a lighthouse, and far away toward the middle of the curve were the lamps of the town of Durban.

"And so this is Africa," thought Miles. "A new country to me, and a hard nut for the Government to crack. I wonder what I shall find there?" he asked himself, as he looked at its distant, silent shores, clothed with the dignity of night. "Shall I come home as I landed? shall I find a medal or a grave?" And that other fellow, what would he find? in a few months' time—perhaps even now, he was a spruce young lancer officer; he looked just the sort to shone along and distinguish himself; have his name in all the papers, and go home to receive his reward at Esme's hands. "If he does," muttered Miles, half aloud, "may I never live to know it."

Next morning the regiment embarked for the shore in tugs and boats. Durban town, with its green turf, wild flowers and trees and hedges, reminded one of home, although its long, sandy streets and curiously built houses were more colonial than English. It boasted several places of worship, two clubs and some good shops, and the marchers, as they passed through en route to the station, were not likely to see anything so civilized again for some time.

The marchers traveled by rail as far as the trail went, and then the real campaigning business commenced, then they began to understand what was meant by "the tented field," trek oxen, dengas, fleas, mosquitoes, lazing; it was march, march, march, steadily march, day after day. The new arrivals speedily learned how to make the most of commissariat flour and beef, to pitch and strike tents, to out-span and in-span; but we need not pause to describe their route, as this story deals more with the fortunes of Miles and Teddy Brabazon than with the Boer campaign; which has been aptly and abundantly related elsewhere. Long, monotonous, stretching plains, covered with high grass, bowlders, and ant-hills, and vexed with aggravating dengas. Here and there along the track a dead bullock, dead a week, another, dead a fortnight, another, oh blessed change, a skeleton. We see no sign of life—no cattle, no smoke, no trees, no villages, nothing but the broiling sun overhead, the baking veldt underfoot. One, just one or two ominous objects we do pass, near the end of the march—one or two skeletons, and one or two knapsacks lying at the side of the track, in the long, coarse yellow grass.

CHAPTER XIV.

In due time the column came to a halt and real camp life commenced. It was dull work enough; this waiting for orders to move to the front was trying to those who, to use their own phraseology, were eager to be "talking to the natives." There was nothing to be done but grin and bear it, and the time was put in in mending kits, making forays for food on Kadir kraals and Boer farms, cutting wood, and grumbling—there is a great luxury in a good grumble. Captain Brabazon and Gee had pitched their little tents side by side, and were almost as much together as in the old days.

The nights were cold, the dew was heavy, and white, chill fogs of constant occurrence. Visiting the outposts and pickets was a duty that fell to Captain Brabazon about once a week. Between eleven and twelve o'clock one night he was going round the sentries in a dense fog which had come on quite suddenly and obscured the moon most completely, swathing every object in a cloak of thick, white mist.

"I heard a noise just now, sir," said one of the sentries, in a lonely spot; "something like a lot of men on horses tramping below us in the valley. There it goes again," and, sure enough, Miles made out the uncertain scrambling of hoofs, scattering stones hither and thither as they made their way up the hill. "Challenge," he said, promptly.

"Halt! who goes there?" demanded the sentry, in one long word, bringing his rifle to the charge.

And out of the fog a bold English voice replied, "A friend."

"Stand, friend; advance one, and give the countersign."

And very shortly a trotting sound was heard through the soppy grass, and from the midst of the surrounding milk-white top suddenly loomed a man and a horse, lancer officer—in short, Teddy! Oh, happy Teddy! A lieutenant at last, though the glories of your uniform are concealed beneath a cape, and the water is streaming from your helmet, and your very mustache is limp and wet.

"Are these the outposts of the Royal Marchers?" he asked, in a cheery voice, as he reined up his charger.

"Yes, sir," responded the soldier.

"I've been rambling over the whole country, lost in this beastly fog," to Miles, who now came forward, "and only I heard the challenge of your sentries, I'd be rambling still," dismounting from his blowing horse and following Captain Brabazon to the picket fire. As he came within the light thrown by the brushwood, his companion, had he noticed it, started perceptibly; and no wonder, for he recognized, standing before him in the daylight, just the very one person in the surly tone and most unpromising man-

ner, not rising, not showing any alacrity to greet him.

"Yes, with you, of course. I was too dead-beat to talk to you last night. Don't you know who I am, old chap?" accompanying the question with a violent slap on the back.

"Yes, I know who you are right enough," morosely.

"Oh, you do, do you? Well, you might seem a bit more pleased to see me, instead of sitting there like an old bear with a sore head," in a tone of surprise.

"Look here, young fellow," said Miles, suddenly rising. "I'd advise you to leave me alone; I don't want to have anything to do with you. Don't provoke me too far, or we might both be sorry for the consequences."

"Hello! hello! Easy does it. You are on the wrong track; you evidently don't know who I am; come, now, where did you ever see me?"

"On board the Resistance. Will that do?" looking rather dangerous.

"Oh!" quite coolly. "I suppose you recognized me by being with Esme. She was very plucky to come all that way. Poor girl, she was in a terrible state. I thought she would never let me go. How she cried!"

To this remark Miles preserved an ominous silence.

"Tell me one thing," continued this undaunted lancer, squaring himself before his now belliger companion. "Why did you not marry her? What has happened? I declare when I recognized you last night in the colonel's tent you might just have knocked me down with a feather. Why did you not marry Esme?" he reiterated, persistently.

"I should think that no one knows the reason better than yourself," ferociously. "You forget that I witnessed the affecting parting between you and her," he added, in a tone of scorching contempt.

"And what harm if you did?" indignantly. "I say, you know, if you are going to be jealous of a girl's brother you must be a most—"

"Brother! brother!" was all his companion could ejaculate, as he leaned against the wall and stared at Teddy with a dazed, white face, and, in so staring, brought conviction home to his very soul. For was not Teddy looking at him with Esme's own dark-blue eyes?

"Don't you know that I'm Teddy Brabazon?" exclaimed the lancer, seizing his cousin by the arm and giving him a vigorous shake.

"No, I don't," returned Miles, at last rousing his mental faculties from the shock they had sustained. "Mrs. Brabazon told me that 'Teddy was dead,' speaking in a strange voice. 'Yes, she said he was dead.'

"Oh, Mrs. B. would say anything," contemptuously, "but all the same I'm alive and kicking," giving his relative another little shake. "Why, man, you look as dazed as if I had knocked you on the head. Just listen to me, and I'll tell you all about it," still holding him by the arm as though he were afraid he would escape. "You must know, in the first place, that I'm as stupid as a fish, brains, nil; was plucked three times from the line, and as Mrs. B. cut up awfully rough I went off and enlisted; was, in consequence, disowned by the family and given out as dead," speaking so rapidly that the words seemed to tumble over one another in their eagerness to be uttered.

"The only one that stuck to me was Esme; she clung to me like a limpet from first to last."

"And why was I never told?" interrupted Miles, fiercely, suddenly wrenching himself away from Teddy's eagerly detaining hand. "Why did she never speak of you?"

"Because I would not let her," replied the other, frankly. "Over and over again she begged and implored leave to let you into the secret of 'Sergeant Brown,' but I would not listen to her. I said, time enough when I could take your hand as an equal, and as a brother officer. It was just a whim of mine," now possessing himself of Miles' reluctant fingers and shaking them very heartily as he spoke.

"A whim of yours has cost me pretty dear," said his cousin, bitterly. "Forty thousand pounds and Esme."

"How? What do you mean?" blankly.

"How?" angrily. "Why, when I saw her down at Portsmouth that day, on the sly, taking an agonizing farewell of a sergeant of lancers, was not that enough?"

Teddy was now the one whose face expressed incredulous amazement and blank dismay.

"I—I—" proceeded Miles, with a catch in his breath, "rushed after her to the station, feeling like a madman, and no doubt looking the character; had just time to tell her that I had done with her forever; then I exchanged our hellos for forty-eight hours; and to think," clinching his hand, "to think that, after all, it was her brother." He stopped, unable to utter another word.

(To be continued.)

To Correct Rashfulness.

"The bashful young girl must stop thinking about herself," writes Margaret E. Sangster in the Ladies' Home Journal.

"I heard the other day of a man, a college student, who went to visit his sister, a college student also. He was the one man, as it happened, in the dining room with five hundred girls, and he had occasion to cross the room with their bright eyes beaming on him with curiosity and interest. Said my informant: 'The boy was completely at his ease. You would

have thought his sister the only girl present.' Evidently the young man's mother had brought him up in a sensible way and he was free from that bane of comfort, self-consciousness.

It is hard for a very diffident person to be free from awkwardness, and very acute distress and much humiliation may be the results of an extreme shyness. Try not to think how you look, what impression you are making, what sort of gown you have on. Do not let your mind dwell on yourself, but think of what you are to do, and of making others pleased and happy. Once you are free from self-consciousness, bashfulness, will trouble you no more."

James Whitcomb Riley, when speaking of his nationality recently said: "I believe he's looking for me."

"Hello! I say, Brabazon," he hollered, from some distance, "I want to have a word with you before I go," clattering quickly down over the loose stones.

"With me?" returned the other, in a surly tone and most unpromising man-

THE FUSION TICKET.

POPULISTS, DEMOCRATS AND SILVER REPUBLICANS.

Latter Parties Given Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor Respectively—Populists Name the Balance of the Ticket.

Governor—W. A. Poynter (Populist).

Lieutenant Governor—E. A. Gilbert (Silver Republican).

Secretary of State—C. V. Svoboda (Populist).

Treasurer—S. B. Howard (Populist).

Attorney General—Willis D. Oldham (Democrat).

Auditor—H. S. Griess (Populist).

Land Commissioner—P. J. Carey (Populist).

seemed strong for breaking away from all alliances a motion to take a recess prevailed. The Democrats adjourned at the same time, and the leaders got together for conference, with the result that the Democrats yielded everything, accepting a single office on the state ticket and dividing with the Populists and free silver Republicans the eight presidential electors. The conference committees were discharged from duty, the Populists sent their ultimatum to the Democrats on the question of the division of state officers, it was accepted and Gov. Poynter's renomination followed before the noon recess. The ticket was completed during the afternoon.

The three state central committees, to whom had been delegated the selection of presidential electors, reported the following before the conventions adjourned, and their recommendation was adopted:

Frank Ransom, J. H. Fielder, W. A. Garret, W. G. Swan, Peter Elberson, Robert Oberfelder, L. M. Wente and J. Hughes.

A LESSON IN MARKETING.

It Is Quite as Important to Know What to Buy as to Cook.

Good beef should be bright red when it is first cut, and this red flesh should be well marbled with yellowish fat with a thick layer of fat on the outside. If it does not present this appearance you may be quite sure either that the ox was not well fattened, or was too young, or was not in good condition.

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The Populist state convention was called to order at 5:15 p. m. by State Chairman Edmiston, with over 1,200 delegates present. Chairman Doyle made an address of considerable length. Following the appointment of a committee on credentials, W. D. Oldham of Lincoln and R. S. Bibb of Beatrice addressed the convention. The convention took a recess until 8 o'clock.

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Odd Excuse for Burglary.
An odd excuse for burglary was given by a one-legged boy, aged 14. He broke into a hardware store in Kansas City and was captured. He pleaded that he wanted to steal some tools which would enable him to make a wooden leg for himself.

Johnny Knew.
Teacher—Now, Johnny, tell the class what the Sabbath day is.
Johnny—Dat's de day I carry growler in a feed bag—Sing Star of Hope.

A Narrow Escape.
The world has narrowly missed losing some of its great leaders before they grew to manhood. The Outlook tells a story of one of these narrow escapes.

One November evening a mother was journeying toward the city of Marcellus with her son, a lad of eight. She had been to a country-house near the city, and all day the child had run about, happy in his new surroundings. Now fatigue overtook him, and the mother put him in a peach-basket borne by a donkey, and that he might not catch cold in the chill November air covered the basket with a thick brown shawl.

The boy, cozy and warm, presently fell asleep. The donkey trudged on, getting ahead of the woman in its eagerness to reach home.

There was a local custom-house at the gate of Marcellus, and the wary inspector, if he surmised that a package contained contraband articles, resorted to the expedient of thrusting a sharp steel pick through it.

On the present occasion the donkey had come up to the gate, and the inspector was preparing to thrust his pick into the basket, when the mother, some distance behind, caught sight of the movement. The voice of fear is strong, and the sharp cry of the woman that her son was in the basket did not fail to reach his ears. He threw down his pick, and the child was saved. The boy was Adolf Thiers.

Effect of the Mirror.

"I have been noticing a curious little circumstance at my store," said a Canal street business man, the other day. "There is a very fine plate glass in the side casing of my show window, and right behind it is a handsome mirror. One day not long ago I observed what seemed to be a lot of white dust on the window ledge and told the porter to wipe it off. Next day the ledge was as dusty as ever, and after having it cleaned half a dozen successive times I discovered the cause of the trouble. The mirror was certain to catch the eye of every woman who passed, and every little while one would step up close and make some mysterious motions over her face. They always did it when nobody was in sight, and every time the operation was performed the accumulation of white dust increased. It was a blend of several varieties of face powder.

It is too bad that the man with a deep voice doesn't always have a mind to match it.