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"But Armstrong knew much less than he believed." Hastening back to camp and ordering his horse, he was soon speeding up the slope to the windswept heights overlooking the Golden Gate. The morning had opened fine as silk, but by noon the sky was hidden in clouds and rain fell in heavy black sheets and strong. The whitecaps were leaping on the crest of the surges driving in through the straits and the surf bursting high on the jagged rocks at the base of the cliffs. A little coast steamer from Santa Barbara was being driven toward San Francisco, and one of its two venturesome craft, heeling far to leeward, tore through the billows and tossed her stern after a frothing wake. With masts and sails streaming in the stiff gale, the troop horses of the California Cavalry rode down the many herds down the northward slope, and the herd guard nearest the road lost his grip on his drab campaign hat as he essayed a salute, and galloped off on a stern chase down the long ravine to the left.

"By one keen glance over the bay beyond rocky Alcatraz had told him the China was not yet away from her pier. He might have to send a despatch by that swift steamer, and even then it would be six days before reaching Hongkong. But no time could be commandeered should by that time he on his homeward journey the information would still be of interest to the general commanding the new military district at 'The Cross Roads of the Pacific,' and of vast benefit to the United States."

"He wondered what Canker's grounds could be for saddling so foul a suspicion on the boy's good name. He wondered how long this report lad would have to struggle with this attack of fever and remain, perhaps happily, in bed. He wondered if Amy Lawrence yet knew of that serious seizure, and, if she did, what would be her sensations. Down the winding sloping road he urged his way, Glencoe his pet charger, marveling at the unusual calmness of the creature. He wondered how long the sentry's head and awished his cap off as he presented arms to the tall soldier spurring past the guardhouse. "I envy no one who has to put to sea this day," he heard Armstrong to himself, as he turned to look at the Chinese junk, with its red and brown cottage peeping out from a mass of vines and roses, shivering in the wet wind. Half a dozen strides took him across the narrow walk and up the wooden steps, where he found the door ajar. He swung along backward screwed to the back of the door and waited impatient of the servant's coming. There was no answer. He rang again and still again, and no one came. A glance showed him that the door was closed. He turns round, there draped as prettily as ever. Fresh flowers stood on the window sill. A shawl and a pillow, the latter indentured as by a human head, lay in the lounging chair on the little porch. Another chair stood close to the foot of the bed, and a few furs, though furs in a "Frisco summer" were not needed than furs; but nowhere saw he the sign of the temporary mistress of the house. He went round to a side window and rapped. No answer. He rang again, and again, and, taking the reins, bade the orderly inquire next door if Mrs. Garrison could be found. Yes, was the answer; she went driving to Golden Gate park with Mrs. Stockton, and would be home about five o'clock. He had to leave for Los Angeles that night. Odd-

that I saw were marked M. G." The speaker was Mrs. Garrison. To her next-door neighbor, Mrs. Garrison, had said nothing about going away with Mrs. Stockman and Armstrong had grave need to see her and to see her at once. The train for Los Angeles did not leave until evening. Possibly they were lunching somewhere—spending the afternoon with friends in town. He had a hunch that the woman, sister of the staff might be able to tell him his theory, and one of them justified it.

"Did I happen to meet Mrs. Garrison? Yes, I just saw her aboard the China."

"Aboard the China!" exclaimed Armstrong, with a sudden thrill of excitement. "Do you mean she is going?"

"Didn't ask her. They were bustling overboard and I had only time to give dispatches to Purser, but she was on the deck with friends when I came away."

People wondered that day at the speed with which the tall officer, followed by his orderly, clattered away down Market street. In less than ten minutes Armstrong was at the crowded platform, pushing through the throng to the China.

Already it was swung aloft, the lines were cast loose and the huge black mass was just beginning to back slowly from its moorings. The rail of the promenade deck swarmed with faces, some radiant, some fearful. Words of adieu, fluttering kerchiefs, waving hands, long looks of farewell were on every side. Two officers, Honolulu-bound, shouted Armstrong's name and a cheery goodby, but he did not seem to hear. A gentle voice, the voice of all others he longed to hear, repeated the name

CHAPTER XIV.

Learning on the general's ship an hour later and dutifully plotting that bewildered veteran up and down the mercury deck, she came, just as she had planned to come, face to face once more with Stanley Armstrong. Well she knew that under the escort of that exalted rank she was safe from any possibility of cross-question or interference. Well she knew that had he heard of her sudden determination to go to Honolulu she could not have escaped stern interrogation, possibly something worse, and her heart failed her when she realized that the man who had gauged her shallow nature years before now held a lash over her head in the shape of a

MRS. GARRISON? YES, I JUST SAW HER

paper that mad vanity had prompted her to write and send to the officer of the guard the day that Stewart sailed. What madness it was, indeed, yet how could she have been so foolish? Would she not have seen the man of all others she feared and respected—the one man who, had he but cared, could years ago have had her love, the man who, because he cared not, had won her hate? And, now that he held or had held this paper—nothing less than a forged order in the name of General Drayton, she could have covered at his feet in her terror of him, yet braved him with smiles, sweetness and guile, with arch merriment and joyous woe, quitting for the moment the general's arm that she might extend to him both her little white hand and her little white neck? Would he not have left, white with the rage, he raised his finge cap in conbined salute to the woman



AND GRAY WAS FLEADING.

and to his superior officer. Gravely and almost instantly he released it and listened in helpless patience to her torrent of playful words, but his eyes were on the general's face as though he would ask could he, the general, know the true character of the woman he had honored above all her sisterhood on board in thus taking her to the bridge whereon neither officer nor man nor nurse nor army wife had presumed to set foot on all the six days' run from San Francisco, as though he would ask if the general knew just what she was, this

campaigns in the Shenandoah and the west, listening with dilated eye and parted lips, the campaigner himself was captivated, and she had her will. A great senator had told him how she had come thither to nurse a young wife from her husband's regiment, how she had pulled the bow through the perils of brain fever until he was now convalescent and going on to rejoin his comrades in Manila, and she, she was pining to reach her husband now serving on General Drayton's staff. Other women were aboard the Queen; could not General Crabb find a nurse for her? It is hard for a soldier to refuse a great woman, and so a prominent member of the committee on military affairs. There was not a vacant stateroom on the ship. Officers were sleeping three or four in a room, so were the Red Cross nurses; and the two army wives already

board had been assigned a little cubby-hole for himself and one of the other three at a time. There were only two apartments on the big craft that were not filled to their capacity—the room occupied by that sea monarch, the captain, and that which, from having been the "Ladies' Boudoir," had been turned into the mess room for the general. The piano had been wheeled out on deck, the writing table stowed away, and a fine new wide brass bedstead, with dainty white curtains and mosquito bar, a large bureau and a washstand had been placed in the room. There were arm-chairs, electric fans, electric lights and abundant air, made it the most desirable room on the ship. Even Armstrong, colonel commanding the troops aboard, was compelled to share his time the cabin with his men. The quarters of the admiral were bundled into a "skinny" box between decks. There really seemed no place for Mrs. Garrison aboard, especially when it was found that the passenger list was to be increased to 100. But she was not to be deterred. She went forward from Honolulu; and one of these was our old friend and once light-hearted Billy Gray, now hardly convalescent, but strong and, as all would see, feverishly eager to get back to his work.

All this was explained to the senator. It was even suggested that there was room for Mrs. Garrison on the Louisiana, a safe old tub, if she was slow, but Mrs. Frank looked so pathetic and resigned when she thought of the arrangements that no one but the hardihood to actually dwell upon it, and the senator said it was a shame to think of it. With whom of her own sex could she state on that long, hot voyage ahead of that? Why not turn to the Red Cross nurses to the Louisiana? Mrs. Garrison had no objections, but they had, and the surgeon in charge made prompt and vigorous protest. He knew Mrs. Frank and Mrs. Garrison and did not like them, and he did not want them in the least degree. She still had a plan. There was a *cory* dinner one evening—just the evening before the departure of the Queen, and the gallant captain of the ship, the *Queen*, was to be in command in charge of transportation, the members of the senate military committee, some charming girls—but none so charming as Mrs. Garrison—were of the party. There was some complimentary talk about the result of which at 1 a. m. the big-hearted sea monarch aforementioned swore by the bones of his ancestors in the

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a-begging for accommodations on his ship. If the general would condescend to move into his room by thunder, he'd sleep up in his foul-weather den next to the chart room, and Mrs. Garrison—God bless her!—could take the general's room and be queen of the ship—queen of the Queen—queen of queens—by Juppiter! and here's her health with all honor! A soldier, of course, could be no less gallant than a sailor, especially as the captain's room was a bit better than the "Boudoir," and had an ice chest and contents that the veteran campaigner was bidden to consider his own. The agreement was clinched that very night when the party broke up, and little Mrs. Frank shed tears of gratitude upon the general's coat sleeve and threw him after kiss to the handsomest sailor as she hung over the balusters of the broad veranda and waved them away in their swift-running cabs, and then danced off to her room and threw herself on the bed after a mad prouquette about the spacious apartment, and laughed and laughed until real tears trickled from her eyes, and then gave orders to be called at 7 o'clock. She meant to be up and aboard that ship with all her luggage before sense and repentance would come with the morning sun—before either soldier or sailor could change his mind.

To the amazement of the women already aboard, to the grave annoyance of Colonel Armstrong, to the joy of poor Billy Gray and the mischievous merminism of several young-uns, the vessel was, at last, under way. Frank Garrison, the latest arrival, became sole occupant of the finest room on the ship, and it was a bower of lilies and tropical fruit and flowers the breezy day she sailed away from the bay of Honolulu.

But the day was wasted in telling the effect of this "assignment to quarters." Prolific a source of squabble as is the custom where it becomes intensified all at and when, coupled with it, came a shaking up and re-arrangement of seats at table all hope of harmony vanished on the instant. The two young women, who had retained their seats at the captain's table, but two most estimable young women, Red Cross nurses, were dropped therefrom and transferred to that of the second officer on the port side, much to the comfort of a rather large percentage of the crew. The young men, regarding their previous elevation, felt feelings of not unmixed gratification. Then officers, who

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had been seated with the general's staff had to vacate in favor of Mrs. Frank and Dr. Prober and Lieutenant Billy Gray, whose father and the chief were long-time champions, and the Red Cross nurses who had been at the first officer's table fell back to that of the third. It was even then that the other, but he didn't sound so, and they couldn't see it, and there were faces over as the product of the ship's baker when that evening all hands went down to dinner, and the silence maintained, or the ominously subdued tone of the talk, at the other tables

was in marked contrast with the hilarity that prevailed where sat the gray-haired, ruddy-checked old thief and his laughing, scottish-tongued son, the fat that fell from the lips of Witchie Garrison. Armstrong, silent and somber, at the captain's right, looking forward from time to time, saw only one face at the general's table that was not lighted up with merriment; it was the face of the man who had been his enemy for so long. He never entered into his heart, and he wondered as he looked at Billy's curled head

what could have come over that glad young life to leave so deep a shadow on his handsome face.

One night, just one week later, Armstrong's orders were obeyed. More than once in the meanwhile he had invited the young officer's confidence, and Billy, who three months earlier had been all gratitude and frankness, protested there was nothing on his mind. Armstrong's soldierly soldierly ways, as to Canker's charges they were simply rot. He hadn't the faintest inkling what had become of the purloined letters any more than he had of the whereabouts of his Betty. He had only solved one problem, officially proclaimed a deserter. But Armstrong heard more tales of Witchie's devotion to him in his illness, and the slow convalescence that ensued, noted how the girl had been a constant presence, how many a time he would seek her side, even when other men were reading, walking or chatting with her. Armstrong looked with wonderment that was close allied to awe at the girl who had been so long and so blithe lad, who had won such a warm interest in the heart of such a girl as Mary Lawrence, could be forgetful of her, faithless to her, and fascinated now by this

of the starboard side at a half hour when the crew were not washing down decks. Armstrong had been far forward about 2 o'clock one breathless night to see for himself the condition of things in the hospital under the awning. The main deck was crowded with sleeping men, and he could not see. It was impossible to stand the heat below; so on his return, instead of continuing along the gangway, he decided to climb the iron ladder from the main to the promenade deck, and to look down the main at the forward end of the ship. He was almost at the top of the ladder on the starboard side. There he could see a cigar in peace and quiet. It was high time everybody was asleep.

But as his head and eyes reached the level of the deck he became suddenly aware of a man sitting close together in the shelter of a canvas screen, and he took steps leading aloft to the bridge. He knew Gray's voice at once, and Gray was pleading. He knew her tones of old, and she was imperative, and hating with obvious impropriety. "I don't care," she said, "for your arrival she spoke, low, yes, distinctly." "As I say; do as I beg you when we reach Manila, and then excuse—and see how I can reward."

But was it! The days had grown hotter, the nights colder, and the air between decks was stifling when the sea rolled high and closed the ports. Officers had taken to snoring on deck, and the staterooms, by an unwritten law, were closed. The stateroom made deck was given up to them at eleven at night, but the women folk had the run of the ship.

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dearly, but he was deaf to both. Eagerly, anxiously, incredulously he was awaiting the next word, and, all at once on a sudden he said: "Yes, and I stood, all gayety, grace and animation, statelyly kownd and fairly burdened with roses; and it was right at him who was gazing, nodding, smiling, all sweetness, all confiding, trusting joy; with just a little triumph, too, and a tinge of sentimental sorrow in the parting. Apparently, it was all for nothing to her—blue eyes never faltered till they closed. And I, too, after she kissed me, she threw to him with the daintily gloved little hand, and, leaning far down over the rail, lowering it toward him as much as possible, she finally tossed to him, standing there stern and spellbound, a bunch of beautiful roses she had torn from her corsage. It fell almost at his feet. For his consternation and rising wrath he made no effort to pick them up, stopping quickly, resumed and handed it to him. Mechanically he said "Thank you," and took it, a thorn pricking deep into the flesh as he did so; and still his eyes were fixed on that fairy form now surely, swiftly gliding away, and over him swept the consciousness of utter defeat, of exasperation, of dismay, even as he strove to fathom her meaning, hissing him out for such conspicuous—even conspicuous—insultation. Triumph and delight he could hardly understand, but not, not this semblance of confidential relations, not at least until he felt his arm grasped by a cordial hand.

slowly to reach the waters at the stern, and gently, almost imperceptibly at first, the Queen slid noiselessly along the edge of the dock, to the accompaniment of a little volley of flowers and garlands tossed from eager hands, and a cheer of acclaim from the multitude of onlookers who turned faces. And then there arose another shout, a shout of mingled merriment, surprise and applause, for all on a sudden there darted up the stairway from the crowded promenade deck to the sacred perch above, defiant of the leistered warning, "Passengers are not allowed upon the bridge." A brilliant, tall, slimy white, and all in the next moment, there came the general's aide, smiling, bowing, blowing kisses, waving adieux, all sparkle, animation, radiance and rejoicing, a bewitching little figure in the airiest, loveliest of summer toiles. The Red Cross nurses on the deck below looked at one another and gasped. Two brave army girls, wives of wounded soldiers in the Philippines, who by special dispensation were permitted to accompany the Queen, glanced quickly at each other and said—nothing audible. The general, lifting his cap, but looking both deprecation and embarrassment, fell back and gave his place at the white rail to the new arrival, and colored high when she suddenly turned and took his arm. The captain, trying to appear to appear conscious of the infraction of a regulation, and his own evasion of his dignity, tried to order her to

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