

would sooner tell Deane, with passionate emphasis, that she loved him, than to inform me that my new cut of coat was becoming.

"First among the young women at the post was the queenly Miss Farlington, the daughter of the commandant. She had been educated in Europe and had had a season of social triumph at a northern watering place and when she dropped down into our circle of army society she at once became a central figure. It seemed that the natural things had happened when she and Deane drifted together, or rather when she, with a coolness that ebashed the others, began to monopolize him. She appeared to appropriate Deane to herself as her right as social queen, since he was by long odds the best thing to be found among the men. He enjoyed her society, but was clearly unconscious of the marked preference she showed for him, and accepted it as he did the attentions of all the other women.

"It was gossiped about the post, in a quiet way, of course, that the two were engaged. I knew Meriwether better than anyone else, as we occupied the same quarters, and I did not believe this gossip, although they were together very often.

"I suppose I watched the pair more closely than anyone else. My friendly interest in Meriwether caused me to do it, and my observations left no doubt on my mind as to the nature of Miss Farlington's feelings towards him. Proud and cold in her bearing toward others, she was all smiles and pretty speeches when Deane was around. If he waltzed too often with another woman she could not conceal her chagrin.

"Deane never spoke to me about his affairs with her, but one day I touched upon the subject in delicate way. He flushed up a bit and made some light remark. I told him that it was pretty plain that she was in love with him. He treated my remark with impatience, and dismissed the matter with the reply, 'Nonsense, Cameron, you are too easily fooled. You don't know women at all. It is a sacrilege to say that a queenly creature like the colonel's daughter would fall in love with one.'

"Perhaps I didn't know women as he knew them, but my opinion, which had been formed upon evidence that was too conclusive to be doubted, was not altered by his words.

"I have said that he was not a flirt; I repeat it here. But at one time I believed otherwise. Our room was brightened by the photographs of innumerable women, each one of whom might have thought at one time that she would some day be Mrs. Meriwether. In this charming convention of beauty, however, was the picture of one woman—sweet, demure and pretty—who by no possible chance could have shared in this general hope. It was a photograph of Aileen Murphy, a sergeant's daughter. I wondered how it came into his possession and even went so far as to ask him about it. 'That,' he replied carelessly. I thought; why that's a little friend of mine.' You're a gay fellow,' I said to him. 'Hadn't you better conduct your flirtations outside of the post? Miss Farlington might get hold of them.' He made no reply but took up the picture and gazed at it thoughtfully for a moment. He replaced it beside a picture of Miss Farlington and looked at the two critically.

"Not long after this I accidentally overheard a conversation which convinced me that Meriwether was carrying the thing too far. I resolved to speak to him about it at once. What I heard was a conversation between the wives of two privates. They stopped beneath my widow early one morning and I

could not help hearing what they said, it was about Meriwether and the sergeant's daughter. One of them said that it was sure to turn out badly. I gathered from their remarks that it was common talk among the soldiers' wives that Deane's conduct deserved severe censure. Several times he had been seen walking with the girl, and once with his arm about her.

"What if Miss Farlington should hear of his little indiscretion on Deane's part?' I thought.

"I had no chance to speak to Deane that morning for a most unexpected and unlooked for thing occurred. Word was received by a runner, all telegraphic communication to the north having been cut off, that the redskins were about to attack a post just northwest of us. Preparations for an immediate departure were begun. The post was in a turmoil of excitement during the rest of the day; the men were in a stir and the women excusably excited and nervous, some hysterical.

"Colonel Farlington divided his men, he taking half to the relief of the menaced post, and leaving me at our post, in charge of the remainder. I was instructed to be on the alert and ready for an attack.

"It was an inspiring sight as the men rode away. There off to one side, astride his magnificent horse, sat Meriwether. I was talking to him just before the men moved off. Miss Farlington had been standing for some time by her father, and now she came over to Deane. 'For a man who is going to war,' she said to him, with a little laugh, 'you look unusually happy.' 'It's not a very pleasant business,' he replied, but I hope we will get back all right.' 'I trust that you will,' she said, offering him her hand. Before he could reply the colonel's deep voice was heard, and Deane rode to his place, tipping his cap in graceful salute.

"The days that followed seemed longer and hotter than days usually are and we were all in suspense.

"I was keenly disappointed at being left behind, as this was the only opportunity I had ever had for active service; but an army man must obey without questioning the wisdom of his superior's action, so I kept my disappointment to myself. I found myself occupying a very prominent position. Practically I was in command of the post. Every hour I was besieged with anxious inquiries from wives whose husbands had gone out. It was not for news that they asked—they knew our facilities for getting it, except by courier, had been destroyed—but for my opinion on the possible outcome of the clash.

"Although I could not forgive the colonel for condemning me to peace, my new importance was some recompense for my defeated hopes. I kept on the qui vive. Outposts would have informed me in time to make an immediate defense, but neither myself or the women at the post felt any nervousness on this score; the whole of the anxiety was concerning the fate of the men that had already gone to the fray.

"I made it a point during the three days that passed after the departure of Deane, to watch the colonel's daughter. She was apprehensive of fearful consequences, and could not conceal her feelings from me. Two days after the troops had been led out by the colonel, she called me to her.

"Lieutenant,' she asked 'do you think it at all likely that you will get any news to-night?' 'No,' was my answer. 'I think not. We are dependent upon couriers and it is a good distance. If I hear anything later on,' I added, 'I will let you know at once.' 'I shall wait up,' she replied. 'I can

hear the courier's horse, if a message comes.' As I started away she said: 'Lieutenant, we women of the army should be very brave. Such terrible things are possible that we should be strong enough to meet them. I thought I was brave until now. I thought I could send some one I cared very much for—a father or a brother, or a husband, if I should have one—to fight, with a strong heart, but this, my first actual experience, has taught me that I am not fitted for army life.

"Your father,' I replied, 'has seen a great deal of service.' 'Yes,' she answered, 'but a battle is so horrible. Some are certain to get killed. It may be a person dear to you—how can you tell?' Her voice was tremulous in its deep anxiety. Suddenly her manner changed. I could see that she wished me to believe that she had changed the current of her thoughts, but her words convinced me that she had not.

"This is a fine opportunity,' she said, 'for the ambitious young officers. Some of them must feel certain of their promotions. Lieutenant Meriwether will get his, I feel sure.'

"Late that night a courier did reach the post, and brought tidings of a bloody fight. He bore a message from Colonel Farlington, saying that he had arrived just in time and had succeeded in driving the Indians back with but little injury to his men. 'They are by no means satisfied as yet,' he wrote, 'and the devils are plotting mischief. They have fallen back and will gather their forces and make a move in a day or two. Of course, we can't tell what that will be. Having learned that we are here, they may attack you. Be ready for such an emergency.' Meriwether sent me a short note. He had led a most ingenious movement which had scattered the Indians in great disorder. He thought his promotion was assured.

"I carried the news to the colonel's daughter, and on my way back to the office, Aileen Murphy stopped me. She asked me very calmly what news I had heard. I told her, and added: 'But I guess what you want to know is about Meriwether. He's all safe. Have you been waiting up, too?' Afterwards I regretted that I had made reference to Deane's little flirtation with her.

"A week of inaction passed without news. It was a week of suspense, of course. One day Miss Farlington came to me in high spirits. She held an official paper in her hand. It stated that Colonel Farlington's recommendation of Meriwether's promotion would be forwarded at the earliest possible moment. 'It means that Lieutenant Meriwether will be a captain,' she said, almost joyously. I thought, 'It has been just received by mail.'

"That afternoon a courier came galloping into camp, his horse white with foaming sweat. He brought unpleasant news to us. The men from our post had left the other fort, having abandoned all apprehension of an attack and had been themselves set upon by the Indians. This unexpected onslaught proved disastrous to our men, although they repulsed their assailants. Several had been killed on both sides. Meriwether had been mortally wounded. 'They're just an hour behind me with the lieutenant,' the courier told me, excitedly.

"The news was all over the post in a minute, and everything was excitement. I waited at the hospital as calmly as I could, and there, after a little, Miss Farlington joined me. She bravely tried to compose herself, but failed. I noticed that in her trembling hand she held the answer to Colonel Farlington's recommendation of Deane's promotion.