

# WAS IT A VOLUNTARY SURRENDER?

Geo. Howard, in Chicago Record-Herald



OUTSIDE the gloomy and deserted church in which the little company of soldiers was bivouacked, the night was dark and silent—so silent, indeed, that in the very stillness one found a menace, a hint of some subtle, hidden treachery. Every man of them felt this. None, apparently, was able to thrust aside its sinister suggestion. A tense atmosphere of suspense hung thickly about them. As they talked in low voices, they huddled closely together, utterly unmindful of the oppressive heat. The continued absence of the scouts who were out reconnoitering to find a way of escape was nerve-racking.

The captain and the lieutenant sat some distance apart from the rest on the platform which had once been used for the altar. They were, it seemed, the only men in the place who had managed to retain their customary poise of manner. Face to face with grave danger, with, perhaps, almost certain death, they were as cool and calm as ever, quite content to remain waiting for it in the frank silence of firm friendship.

This strange friendship had always puzzled the men who followed them. Never were two men more dissimilar. Lieutenant Browning was young, alert, a boy who seemingly without effort won the hearts of all who knew him. Captain Ransome, on the other hand, was cold and austere, a grim and silent man, whose colorless face seemed always shrouded behind a mask of impenetrable melancholy. No one had ever seen his bloodless lips curve in a smile. Until he and Browning had met at Samar, no one had ever known him to have a friend.

Nevertheless, from their first meeting—that had been on Browning's arrival from Manila, whence he had come to join Ransome's company—they had been friends, not in the perfunctory sense of two men who are thrown in contact with each other by circumstances, but with the warm intimacy of a mutual regard and affection. Browning, it seemed, was the only person who had ever found the way to Ransome's cold heart, the only one who had ever brought an expression of tenderness to his steel-blue, deep-set eyes. It was in their conversation that Browning had learned that Ransome had suddenly remembered how from the first they had shared everything, until at last, it seemed, they were even to meet death together.

For a long time the glance continued between the two, while Ransome gazed down at the boy who, lying full length on his back, was staring above into the dim shadows that clustered beneath the vaulted roof. At length he spoke.

"Will you find it hard to meet this death, Harry?" he asked, in a cold, even voice. There was no trace of feeling in it, no trace of curiosity, even.

Browning stirred, and turned his eyes toward him. "Yes," he answered simply enough.

A smile so faint that after all it was not a smile at all, but rather a vague expression of contempt, rested for an instant on the other's face. "You are afraid?" he asked, a mild wonder in his tone.

Once again the other was staring up at the roof. "Not for myself." There was no resentment at the other's question in his slow voice—"not for myself; but you see there is a girl."

He paused for just a perceptible instant—it was the only way in which he revealed that he felt the dread of his position at all—and then added, "at home."

Oddly enough, it was the first confidence of a tender or intimate nature that had been exchanged between the two men. Both realized this at the same instant, and the realization brought them suddenly closer to each other. Of the two it was Ransome who seemed the more affected. He leaned toward the other, a faint tinge of color on his pale cheeks.

"A girl at home," he echoed, and paused. He meant apparently to say something more. Possibly he intended to match confidence for confidence; but he found no opportunity to do so, for before he had time to speak again, Browning, who still stared at the ceiling above him, said:

"It's the thought of leaving her alone that hurts."

Ransome had suddenly stooped before him and rescued a piece of paper from the floor, which now he idly twisted in his long fingers, eyeing it meanwhile with curious intentness.

"Yes," he said, "I can understand that."

"I—I've never spoken to you of her," Browning continued, for the first time a shade of embarrassment creeping into his voice; "but, if you don't mind, I should like to tonight."

"I should like to have you," the other returned gravely, and then, with a certain curious shyness he asked, "You are engaged to her?"

A sudden shadow flew across Browning's boyish face, and lingered in his dark, bright eyes. "No," he replied, and then after a moment's hesitation he proceeded, his embarrassment meanwhile increasing visibly. "She is pledged to marry another man—" He paused abruptly in sudden distress.

The other's cold, even voice came quickly to his rescue. "Yet—yet you love her and she loves you," he said, not in an interrogative tone, but as one who states a fact.

"Yes," Browning suddenly sat upright and faced him; "but you must not think hardly of her because of that," he went on hastily.

"It was something which neither she nor I could help, something she fought against very bravely with all her strength."

He ceased speaking and began carefully to trace an elaborate pattern with his finger in the thick dust that covered the floor. For a long time the silence lasted between them. It was Browning who broke it at last.

"You see," he said, "she gave her promise to the other man before she knew what love meant—before we had met each other. She knew, of course, that she did not love the other man," he continued, still intent upon the figure he was drawing, "but she was bound to him by many ties. Since the death of her father and mother he had been her best, almost her only friend. By his tender thoughtfulness and care he had made her sad life easier to bear. You see, she owed him everything."

Strangely enough, though Browning's averted eyes did not observe it, a curious change had come over his listener. The apathy which seemed always upon him had vanished utterly. He was listening to every word with an odd breathless intentness so strained as to suggest that of a man waiting to hear the sentence which should make or mar his life.

"And so," Browning went on slowly, "when on the night before he left for the front—"

"For the front!" there was a sudden sharpness in Ransome's voice as he echoed the words, a sudden look of pain lighted his cold, blue eyes. His manner was that of a man who all at once faces a horrible suspicion—a suspicion which with all his strength he tries, and tries vainly, to subdue. It was with an obvious effort that he continued. "For the front!" he said once more. "Then he is a soldier."

Browning nodded. "Yes, he is a soldier, like you and I, though I do not know his name. Alice would never tell it to me."

"Alice!" The strange note in Ransome's voice seemed to have become intensified, the dreadful suspicion was apparently growing stronger and stronger. "Alice!" he repeated in a voice so low that it was almost a whisper.

Again Browning nodded. "That is her name," he admitted, a sudden grave tenderness creeping into his voice. "I had not meant to speak it; but after all it does not matter now."

The other gave a queer little hopeless shrug. "No," he agreed, "it does not matter now." He paused for an instant, and then added in the cold, hard voice that was usual with him, "Nothing matters now."

A silence fell between them. It was Browning presently who broke it. He was still utterly oblivious to the strange change in the other's manner; he seemed quite uncon-

scious of the furtive, almost frightened look in the cold, blue eyes, the deadly pallor of the white, drawn face before him.

"As I was saying," he resumed, "the night before the other man was leaving for the front, he told Alice that he loved her. He was, so she has told me, a coldly reserved man, and up to that moment she had never had the least suspicion of the truth. But, when once the barriers had been swept away, he showed her that his feeling for her was very deep and very strong. It almost frightened her to look upon his love, it was so great. She saw that her consent meant everything to him, that she was the one hope of his lonely life."

He paused for an instant and shrugged his shoulders wearily. The other did not so much as glance at him. His eyes were closed tight, his mouth was drawn into a thin, straight line, his fists were clenched. He held himself so still that it seemed as though he scarcely even breathed.

"Seeing this," Browning went on, "Alice remembered his goodness to her, his thoughtful care, his boundless tenderness. No man, remember, had ever moved her heart; she knew little of love, nothing of love. It is easy to understand how gratitude prompted her to do what she did. She promised to be his wife. She even permitted him to believe that she loved him."

Had Browning glanced at his friend's face at that moment he must certainly have guessed the truth. It was gray and twisted with pain. Plainly enough, only a supreme effort enabled him to retain his self-control. But he did not notice it. Still dreadingly intent upon carving figures on the floor before him, he continued:

"It was after this that I went to Lenox for a few weeks."

"Lenox!" the tone in which Ransome whispered the word was so strange that at last it attracted Browning's attention, and he glanced quickly up at him. But not quickly enough. Anticipating the movement, the other had bent his head down over the paper he was still twisting in his fingers. In the shadows it was still obscure.

"Yes, Lenox," Browning remarked after a silence. "That is where the girl lives."

"Oh!" sighed Ransome, and the way in which he said the word spoke volumes. Suspicion had now become an absolute certainty. He who uttered it was, even as he did so, parting from a hope which he had treasured close to his heart—a hope that was now forever vain, and without which his life would always be solitary and alone.

"Well, as I said," Browning proceeded, "I went to Lenox, and we met. Almost from the first, we loved each other, as a man and woman love but once in their lives. Not that she confessed it, for she did not. She fought against it with all the strength of her life; but at last it conquered her—love always wins—and she surrendered. Then she told me everything. She told me that she loved me; but that our love was hopeless because of her pro-

mise to the other man. No matter what the cost, no matter how great a trial of strength it was, she meant to keep that promise. He will never know the truth. Then she kissed me once and sent me from her. That is why I fear death. If I was alive, I might in some way make her hard life easier. If she needed help I might give it to her. You see, if I die, I leave her all alone."

Ransome suddenly turned and faced him. He had subdued his emotions. His face now was as masklike, as impassive, as ever, the glance of his light, cold, blue eyes was unwavering, and when he spoke his voice was still hard and passionless. "And besides," he looked steadily into Browning's eyes, "you still hope that her love for you will be so strong that she will not find the courage to marry the other man, but instead will come to you?"

Browning's face went white; but he did not shift his gaze from the other. "Yes," he replied, bowing gravely, "I still hope that."

"I thought so." The words came with a sharp click as of steel, as he rose quickly to his feet. It was then for the first time that Browning became aware of his change of manner. A look of wonder flashed across his face as he also rose. For a breathless instant the two men stood facing each other. Ransome with a deadly look in his cold eyes. Browning with a perplexed stare. At that instant there came a stir from the other end of the room. One of the scouts had returned, bringing the tidings of their fate. His words would tell them whether it was to be life or death.

The scout passed by the enlisted men without giving them so much as a glance, and made his way directly to where Captain Ransome was standing. There he saluted.

It was Ransome who spoke first. "Well?" he asked in a sharp, hard voice.

"We're in a tight box, Cap'n, and that's a fact." The scout uttered the words lightly enough, a broad grin widening his mouth. Here was a man evidently who faced all things, even death, tolerantly. "These here red Tagalogs has us boxed in for fair."

"Then there is no hope?" Ransome broke in. "I don't go as far as that," returned the man, "for there is a chance; but it's only a chance. There is the bed of a dried up creek running along by the southeast end of the church. It leads into a wood that's not so closely watched as the other ways of escape. You can last here for twenty-four hours easy and in the meantime I can try and get through by that path and bring reinforcements. Understand, I don't promise to succeed but I can try."

Ransome nodded as he listened. "Very good," he said when the other had done. "We shall act upon the suggestion you offer, with one slight amendment. You will remain here—you are too valuable to be spared just now—and another will be sent to make the attempt to pass through the enemy's lines."

The words banished for the first time the good-humored smile from the other's face. All at once it had become grave and set. "But, Cap'n," he protested, "no other man but me can

make it. It's certain death to send anyone else—they haven't had the bringing up; they don't know the lay of the land."

Ransome remained unmoved at this speech. I prefer to have another man make the attempt, he replied icily. "If he fails—and we shall know it by hearing the shots—you will then have your chance."

The tone in which he spoke convinced the scout that this decision was unalterable. Therefore he saluted, and made his way to the men.

Browning, amazed at Ransome's action and unable to understand it, stepped forward to his captain's side. It seemed impossible to believe that Ransome would coldly send a man to certain death for no purpose at all. "Captain," he whispered, "whom are you going to send?"

Slowly Ransome turned until he faced him, slowly he raised his cold hard eyes until they gazed squarely into Browning's own. "You!" he said.

A tense and breathless silence followed his words. In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, he saw what he had been blind to. The knowledge made his brain reel. Presently, however, he regained his self control. White-faced and stern, he leaned forward.

"You are the man whom Alice has promised to marry?" he whispered.

Ransome's gaze never wavered. "Yes," he said.

A sudden wave of passion swept over Browning. "And you mean to murder me!" he hissed through his clenched teeth. "By God! I—" He took a step toward Ransome and raised his hand threateningly.

The other did not flinch. He still looked him coldly in the eyes, while his face remained calm and impassive. "Lieutenant Browning, you have heard the orders of your superior officer!" he said sharply. "Do you dare to disobey them?"

For an instant there was no answer. Then gradually Ransome's dominant strength, together with the iron discipline of years, gained the ascendancy. Slowly the hand that had been raised to strike moved over to the vizor of the lieutenant's cap in salute; then lifelessly it fell to his side.

For half an hour Browning crept through the thorny and tortuous gully, which the little stream had carved during the high waters of winter. The church that formed the camp lay fully half a mile behind him. The wood that was to be his shelter was coming nearer and nearer. He stopped for an instant's rest. After all it might be possible that the scout had overestimated the danger; after all there might be still a chance for life and—Alice.

His rejoicing, however, was brought to a sudden close. All at once from the thick gloom through which he had just crept a sound reached his ears—the sharp snapping of a twig. Some one was following him! In the faint belief that perhaps his presence might not be discovered, he stopped and hid behind a heavy boulder. He had little hope that this subterfuge would succeed. It seemed impossible that anyone could pass without hearing his choking breath, without hearing the loud beatings of his heart.

Slowly and surely the sounds of the pursuer came steadily onward. At last he was almost upon him. If he would only pass on without seeing him! In the keenness of his suspense Browning closed his eyes. Oddly enough, as he lay there waiting for death, the picture of Alice rose clear before him. It was this sudden and distinct vision that made his fate a trifle easier to bear.

Something of his tension passed from him. It was then he realized that the footsteps of his pursuer had ceased; that the man was bending over him. With an effort that took all his courage he opened his eyes, and saw—the face of Captain Ransome. For an instant his surprise mastered him. Then slowly he rose to his feet.

"You!" he whispered.

The other nodded. "I am not," he answered him in the same low tone, "such a villain as you may think. I have merely left it to God to decide between us. It is impossible to believe that both can make our way through the enemy's lines. One of us must fall; and for the other, life and Alice. Each of us has an equal chance; the rest is with God."

For an instant Browning gazed at him in amazement. Then he reached out and grasped the other's hand. It was almost at that very instant that the crucial moment came. Suddenly from out of the darkness that surrounded them there leaped a brown skinned savage, his knife raised high in the air. It so happened that Browning was the closer to him, and upon him he leveled his attack. In two leaps he had reached his side. An instant he held above him his gleaming knife. Then with all his strength he drove it home—and Captain Ransome was no more; for as the knife descended he had flung himself between the two and had taken the thrust in his own breast, and even as he did so had driven his own dagger straight to the heart of the savage. Without a sound they fell almost as one.

Still dazed by the lightning like rapidity with which the whole scene had been enacted, Browning bent over the body of the man who had saved him. "Ransome!" he cried, "Ransome!"

The other stirred and opened his eyes. "Alice!" he breathed. And so he passed away. A moment longer Browning bent over the dead form. Then with a broken sob, he rose and started once more on his way through the dark night toward life and liberty.

## THE KING'S SHOOTING



FICTION, industriously kept up by the press, is that King Edward is a first-class shot. He is, and always has been, a keen sportsman, and loves a good day's shooting, but he is not and never has been a really good shot.

The Prince of Wales is beyond dispute a first-class all round game shot. But the King is not really even to be called a moderate shot in the first-class company with which he shoots. As in everything else where a king is concerned, there is a strict etiquette to be observed when he shoots.

His host never shoots, but stands behind the King, and heartily agrees with His Majesty, when, as is his custom, he turns around after dropping a bird, with a genial smile and the remark, "That was a good shot." A bird that the King has missed goes free; no one else may fire at it after it has escaped the royal cartridge and passed the royal sportsman. The number of such fortunate birds is great.

Some years ago, when he was Prince of Wales, the King caused an intimation to be given to a certain nobleman that he proposed to honor him with a three days visit to shoot his pheasants. Several years in succession the big bags secured on this nobleman's shoots had attracted great attention. It was unfortunate that the Prince was late in this particular.

When the notification of his intended visit was received the coverts had been recently and thoroughly shot. But the noble owner had never had the honor of entertaining the Prince of Wales, and foolishly refused to let the opportunity slip. Instead of saying that his birds were practically all shot and suggesting that the Prince might favor him next season, he bought up thousands of hand reared birds and turned them into the coverts, then trusted to luck.

Fortune naturally would not favor so poor a sportsman. On arriving at the first stand before even the beaters had started the Prince was displeased. He has always liked comfort, but when he saw a large cork rug with the Prince of Wales' feathers stamped thereon in gift to keep his royal feet dry he quickly ordered its removal. There was a similar piece of

cork at every other stand, but the Prince never saw the second.

The beaters got at work, but never a bird came out of the covert. The Prince looked astonished, his host anxious. At last, when the beaters were almost through the covert, the catastrophe came.

Hundreds upon hundreds of frightened pheasants came scampering out. Hatched and reared under wire netting they had never learned to use their wings, and a few days in the open had not taught them how. Without a shot fired the Prince there and then terminated his visit.

The day, however, was not over for the pheasants. They had been so thoroughly frightened by the beaters that they ran on till they reached the public paths, and even the village streets. Instead of a dignified death from a royal gun they suffered death by stick and stone at the hands of the yokels, and to this day the county laughs over the great day of "The Prince's Shoot."

So much has recently been written, says Engineering, about the engineering feat accomplished in building a new ore end to the steamship Suevic as being unique, or unprecedented, that it will doubtless interest our readers to know that difficulties of no less magnitude were overcome many years ago by the well-known firm of Messrs. Swan, Hunter, and Wigham Richardson, Limited, the builders of the famous Cunard express liner Mauretania. As long ago as 1899 they undertook a similar contract for the repair of the steamship Milwaukee. This vessel, then belonging to Messrs. Elder, Dempster & Co., but now owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, had an over-all length of nearly 500 ft. She ran on the rocks off the Aberdeenshire coast, and was cut into two portions amidships by means of dynamite cartridges. The after portion was brought, partly under her own steam, stern first, and attended by steam tugs, to Wallsend-on-Tyne. A new fore part was constructed in the builders' yard and duly launched. The old and the new portions were then towed into dry dock and joined together. The whole repair was a success from first to last, and excited at the time the admiration of the engineering world.

## NEW MINING UNDERTAKING



THE activity which prevails within the Swedish industrial world is simply amazing; amalgamations, expansions and extensions on a large scale are the order of the day. The latest move in this connection is the extension of the Lulea Iron Works and the purchase by this concern of the Svappavaara iron-ore deposits in Lapland. It has been decided to erect a double briquette plant at Lulea, and to build an additional number of workmen's dwellings, as the number of hands will have to be materially increased. The capital will also be increased by the issue of 1440 new shares of a nominal value of 500 kr. each, but recently 1250 kr. has been paid per share, in which case the increase of capital will amount to about 1,800,000 kr. The present capital of the Lulea Iron Works is 2,280,000 kr., and, according to its concession, the maximum capital may be 6,000,000 kr. The Svappavaara Iron Ore Deposits Company, which has a capital of 4,000,000 kr., has not so far paid any dividends, although the Svappavaara ore deposits are considered some of the richest in Sweden. Where remunerative working has not yet been established, the reason is usually the difficult conditions of transport, but this difficulty will be overcome by the construction of a railway from Svappavaara to the Cellivara-Riksgransen Railway—by which the other large Lapland ore deposits ship their ore to either coast. A concession for the building of this railway was applied for some time ago, and it is understood that the concession will now be granted, in which case the railway, in question will no doubt promptly be taken in hand. The extension of the Lulea Iron Works points towards at least part of the Svappavaara iron-ore being handled within the country. The Svappavaara mines have been taken over by the Lulea Iron Works at a price of 8,000,000 kr., or twice the nominal value of the share capital.—Engineering.

The Suffolk County Licensing Committee has sent to the justice of the county a resolution it has passed that in 1908 new liquor licenses shall be granted for a term of two years only.

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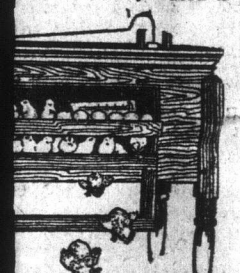
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