

of that party he would disown, disgrace, deny him, forbid his sight, cut him off forever. And right in the midst of it all—a judgment, some people said—there came the awful news that Cornet Maitland of the Lancers was to be court-martialed for misbehaviour in face of the enemy. Of course the old man only raged at first,—said it couldn't be true,—'twas all some toul invention or ridiculous blunder; but he ran up to London and saw somebody at the Horse-Guards,—that's our War Office, you know,—and came back looking a century older and simply crushed to earth. Mrs. Cowan says they showed him the official report of a general officer who was called upon to explain why he had not sent certain troops to the relief of an advanced and threatened post, and replied that he had sent the order by Cornet Maitland of the Lancers, had given him an escort of a dozen men and strict injunctions to push through by night, at all hazards, though the way was beset with Zulus, and that he neither went through nor returned, but was found hiding at a kraal two days after, only twenty miles away. The escort returned, and after much cross-examination had told the story, separately and collectively, that the young officer had become utterly unnerved towards midnight by the reports from scouting-parties and others, had declared to them that it was simply madness to attempt to push through,—they would be massacred to a man,—and, though they announced that they were stanch and ready, he refused, and ordered them to bivouac where they were for the night; and in the morning he had disappeared. They declared they supposed he had gone back to camp, and, after waiting a day, they returned, reporting him lost. When found at the kraal he was delirious with fever, or pretended to be, said the general, and he was brought in under arrest, and the trial was to proceed. I don't know how it turned out. He was not court-martialed, but permitted to return to England. It was said he told a very different story,—that he had begged the brigade major who detailed the escort to let him have half a dozen of his own Lancers instead of the pack of irregulars they gave him; he did not trust them, and feared they would abandon him as they did the Prince; but the staff-officer said the order couldn't be changed,—these men knew the country, and all that sort of thing, you know; and there was one fellow in the Lancers who stuck to it that he believed Maitland had tried his best to get through alone. But 'twas all useless: somebody had to be held responsible, and the failure was all heaped on him. Meantime, there had been a fury at home; old Maitland had written casting him off, repudiating,—cursing him, for all I know,—and the next thing there came a messenger from the captain of his ship at Southampton. They brought his watch, his ring, his sword, and portmanteaus, and a letter which was written on receipt of that his father sent him,—a long letter, that the old man never read to any living soul, but broods over to this day. The young fellow bade them all good-by; he would not live to disgrace them further, if that was what was thought of him at home, and leaped overboard from the steamer the night after she weighed anchor,—no one aboard could tell just when, but he was writing in his state-room as she cleared the harbor, and the steward saw him undressing at nine o'clock. In the morning everything was found in perfect order.—his letter to the captain of the ship, the portmanteaus, watch, ring, clothing, etc., just as he had described in that letter,—and he was no more seen. It was the conviction of all that he must have leaped overboard in the darkness when far out at sea.

"Then Mrs Maitland bowed her head and never lifted it again. Then, all alone, and fiercely rejecting anything like sympathy, old Maitland took to travel,—came here to America, wandered around the world, shunning men as he would these prairie-wolves; and when he had to go to England he would see no one but the attorneys and solicitors with whom he had business. Here at Dunraven he is more content than anywhere, because he is farther from the world. Here Gladys is queen: 'twas she who named it, two years ago, for her mother was a connection of the earl's. But Maitland even here hates to have his name mentioned; and that is why I say he refers all business to me and keeps himself out of everything. Do you see what a weight he carries?"

Mr. Ewen had grown red with the intensity and rapidity of his talk. He removed his hat and mopped his face and brow with a big silk handkerchief, and then glanced again at Perry, who had listened with absorbed interest and who was now silently thinking it over, looking curiously at Ewen the while.

"Have I bored you half to death?" asked the Englishman, somewhat ruefully. "I never told that story before, but it has been smouldering for years."

"Bored? No! I never was more interested in my life. I was thinking what a different sort of fellow you were from the man I met out yonder the other day. Did they never do anything to clear the matter up? In our country it never would have been allowed to rest there."

"It was too far gone; and when the boy killed himself the thing was used by all the government papers—you'd call them 'administration organs'—as a confession of judgment. When the Lancers came home there was some talk, but it was soon hushed. Maitland had shut up the old place by that time and gone no one knew where, but I read it in one of the London papers,—*Truth*, I think,—a story that two of the irregulars had quarrelled with their fellows and after the war was over told a tale that made a sensation in Cape Colony. They said that the young officer was a malignant man; that up to midnight he had pushed on, but every scout and patrol they met warned them that thousands of Zulus were ahead, and that it was madness to try. The men began whispering among themselves, and begged the sergeant to attempt to dissuade the Lancer officer; and he did, and they all began to talk, but he refused to listen. At last they halted at a little stream and flatly refused to go a step farther. He ordered, begged and implored. He promised heavy reward to any one of their number who would come and show him the way.

(To be Continued.)

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