"Or a garrison? Governor's Island?"

"No."

"It would be hard, then, for me to make you see just why I like the Philippines," he went on. "I think, perhaps, the real reason is that it's always possible for an enterprising young man," and he bowed modestly, "to get action out there — to start something. That appeals to me, and incidentally offers opportunities for advancement. Here in New York I'm idle; everybody's idle, and that isn't a man's work, you know." He was silent a moment. "If I had to stay here much longer I'd be wearing my handkerchief in my cuff."

Marjorie smiled slightly.

"Are you on furlough, then? A leave of absence? What would you call it?"

"No, not that—worse," replied the Lieutenant hopelessly. "I'm attached to an advisory engineering board with nothing to do. It gets on my nerves. I'm positively oppressed by the desire to do something. The other night I chartered an automobile and skittered all over the landscape trying to make myself believe that something was happening." He paused and regarded Marjorie's profile gravely. "At West Point, you know, they only play at being soldiers, but you like it—the rigid discipline, and the grim way they do it; in a garrison there are soldiers, and you like them because they're the chaps we all depend upon even if they do seem to be idle; but in the Philippines there's always work and lots of it, and it's worth while. Think of it! A handful of our men out there are holding uncounted millions of natives in the straight and narrow way with their noses up to the tie-line, and they're busy every minute. If we ever give up the Philippines I'm going to resign from the army; there won't be anything left to do."

Now it just happened that Marjorie Stanwood didn't know another man in all the wide, wide world who worked for his living. Even papa only sat at a littered desk and told other men what to do, curtly, she thought. Of course, somebody had to dig the ditches, and mend the plumbing, and sweep up the leaves in Central Park. And here was a young man who worked! The novelty of it was simply dazzling! And further, he liked to work!

"It must be wonderful—the sense of responsibility, the work to be done," said Marjorie thoughtfully, dreamily.

"It is wonderful," the Lieutenant agreed. "And it's not like anything you ever saw. A well-dressed woman walking along the principal street smoking an eight-inch cigar is liable to knock you a twister if you are not used to it; and they grow flowers out there—not odourless things like those," and he indicated the orchids. (He knew Dan Wilbur sent them.) "And sunsets? A sunset on Manila Bay is worth going around the world to see."

"I see- I can imagine," remarked Marjorie, after a while, dreamily. "And you are going back. When?"

Lieutenant Faulkner had been dreaming a little. Something in the tone of her voice brought him back to earth, and he regarded her thoughtfully.

"I don't know," he said. "I asked for my transfer a month ago. I'll get it, I know. It may come at any time. It means at least two years there."

Marjorie arose and rearranged the orchids in the vase.

"Is New York absolutely intolerable to you?"

"It was getting so when I asked for the transfer," replied the Lieutenant. "But in the last few days things have changed somewhat, and I'm—I'm not certain now that I want to go."

"Why?" It was a thin, far-away little voice.

Lieutenant Faulkner arose and went to her. She glanced up at him shyly, then her eyes dropped to the orchids again.

"Shall I really tell you?" he asked.

One white hand fluttered, and he reached for it eagerly.

"You told my fortune once, and I didn't- didn't like it very much," she said defensively, and withdrew the hand.

"Shall I really tell you?" he demanded again.

"No, don't tell me—now," she answered pleadingly. And she moved away a little.

"You know, don't you?"

"Yes, I know," faintly.

"And you?"

"It isn't absolutely necessary that you should go, is it?"

And just then Marjorie's maiden aunt, Miss Elvira Stanwood, entered the room.

XIII.

Lieutenant Faulkner never really hesitated but twice in his life—once on his first day in battle when he was introduced to the venomous swutt of a bullet which he knew was intended for him despite the fact that it was fired by an utter stranger, a man who could not possibly cherish any personal animosity against him; and again on that occasion when he laid his hand on the knob of the door leading into Mr. Stanwood's study. In each instance he advanced. He found the white-haired millionaire sitting at a huge rosewood desk. They had never met.

"Mr. Stanwood, I believe?" inquired the Lieutenant.

"Yes."

"I am Lieutenant Faulkner."

Mr. Stanwood glanced at the card.

"Lieut. Robert E. Lee Faulkner," he read. "Sit down."

Lieutenant Faulkner sat down. Mr. Stanwood turned and favoured him with one comprehensive look.

"Of Virginia," Lieutenant Faulkner added. "Thirty years old, only son of General Putnam Faulkner, of the late Confederate States, a fighting man who,

"Is New York absolutely intolerable to you?"

at least on one occasion, took the Federal forces over the high jumps; grandson of two Governors of Virginia in the days when public office was a patriotic obligation and not a commercial transaction; and direct descendant of Amenedab and Charity Faulkner, who landed at Jamestown about 1607 and were, respectively, best man and matron-of-honour at the Pocahontas-John Rolfe nuptials."

Mr. Stanwood listened to this business-like statement with interest born of utter curiosity.

"Amenedab Faulkner, I may add, bore arms by warrant of the British Crown," Lieutenant Faulkner went on. "He was a great-grandson of a third son of a sword-maker of Birmingham who was knighted by the Crown in recognition of a very superior weapon he produced. I am the sole male survivor of the line, graduate of West Point, saw three years' active service in the Philippines with General Underwood, and Congres was kind enough to vote me a medal for services rendered. I have a mother and sister who live on a farm near Petersburg, Virginia."

Mr. Stanwood drew a long breath.

"It's interesting enough," he commented. "May I inquire the purpose of it all?"

Lieutenant Faulkner flowed steadily on.

"I am at present attached to an advisory engineering board in New York, a sort of reward for long service in the field. So far as I am aware no member of my family has ever done a dishonourable thing, none was ever in gaol, and none ever had enough money to keep him awake nights. I am a member of the Army and Navy Club, and in the course of another couple of years I believe I shall be made a Captain. For information as to my past performances I refer to you the Congress of the United States; as to my personal integrity I refer you to the Secretary of War, or, nearer home, to General Underwood, also a member of the Army and Navy Club. I believe that covers the case."

He paused as if that were all. Mr. Stanwood was scrutinising him carefully.

"What is the purpose of all this?" he asked again.

Lieutenant Faulkner drew a long breath.

"I have the honour to ask your daughter's hand in marriage," he explained steadily. "You didn't know me —I have introduced myself."

"Oh!" and the millionaire settled back in his chair with an expression which indicated faint amusement in his eyes. "Oh!" he said again. Had it not been that he was a little startled he probably would have laughed. Certainly he had never been approached in just this businesslike manner before, and he fell to wondering what effect such a cyclonic young man must have had on Marjorie. And as he wondered a frown appeared on his brow.

"You take me unawarese," he said after a moment, defensively. "Of course, you know my daughter?"

"Very well, indeed," the Lieutenant boasted.

"And it so happens that I was not aware of your existence," said Mr. Stanwood. "I never even heard of you."

"I am only thirty," the Lieutenant apologised.

There was something in his tone which caused Mr. Stanwood to pause deliberately and look him over again.

"How long have you known my daughter?" he asked.

Lieutenant Faulkner blushed.

"Nearly a week," he said.

"Nearly a——?" The millionaire arose, amazed. He stared coldly down upon his caller for an instant with menacing eyes. "You haven't dared to intimate to her anything of—of affection, in so short a time?"

"I never intimate things," returned the Lieutenant. "I told her I loved her, if that's what you mean?"

The jaws of the financial giant snapped viciously.

"And she, sir?" he thundered. "What did she say?"

"She said—er—I made her admit that she loved me," the Lieutenant went on. "She told me, though, I was precipitate —headlong, I believe she said—but I explained that it would never happen again and she forgave even that."

"Headlong!" raved Mr. Stanwood. "I should say it was headlong!"

He stamped up and down his study violently. It was the first time in his life he had ever allowed himself to be surprised into anger. Lieutenant Faulkner was as placid as a summer sea; there was only a little steely glint in his eyes.

"Why, confound it sir, it's unspeakable!" Mr. Stanwood bellowed in a rage. "You—you young— "

"Epithets are utterly useless and not in the best of taste," the Lieutenant cut in chillingly. "Sit down a moment."

And Mr. Stanwood sat down. To this day he wonders just what psychic force compelled so quickly an obedience. And, once in his chair, he began to get control of himself again; the deadly, merciless calm which characterised every act of his life reasserted itself.

"I am amazed," he said at last.

"I gathered as much from your actions," observed the Lieutenant. "Will you listen a moment?"

Mr. Stanwood stared at him mutely.

"I saw your daughter first at the opera," the Lieutenant explained. "I was introduced to her at the Sanger ball, and then and there I knew what my feelings were in the matter. I called on her in this house as any gentleman might have called. That I didn't meet you was unfortunate, of course; but I didn't. This afternoon I —I inadvertently told her I loved her."

"Inadvertently?" queried Mr. Stanwood.

"I mean it slipped out," the Lieutenant explained. "I had intended to convince myself that my attentions would not be distasteful to her, and then I should have asked you for permission to pay my addresses. As it happened, a wheel slipped. Anyway, immediately I did know she cared for me I came straight to you." He paused a moment. "I fail to find any flaw in that course of conduct; certainly there is nothing to provoke epithets."

Mr. Stanwood wheeled in his chair and sat for a long time staring moodily out the window. Lieutenant Faulkner merely waited.

"Young man, do you know what you are asking for?" he demanded at last as he turned.

"I do."

"And can you imagine how many men have made that same request?"

"It's a matter of no consequence."

"And the position of those men?" Mr. Stanwood went on emphatically. "Two dukes," he told them off on his fingers, "one earl, three marquises and half a dozen counts."

"Charity forbids me making any comment upon the foreign noblemen who come to this country to woo the daughter of one of the richest men in the United States," the Lieutenant remarked evenly. "Your question answers itself—your daughter is still unmarried."

Mr. Stanwood blinked a little.

"She could marry to-day practically any man in this country, he went on, almost apologetically, "no matter what his wealth or position."

"The greater the compliment to me," the Lieutenant urged. "She loves me!"

"Hang it, that's what's the matter," the millionaire flamed suddenly. "No other man would have dared to do what you have done—go to my daughter first. You haven't played the game as they played it."

"That's why I'm here," returned the Lieutenant calmly. He leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands around one knee. "You didn't play the financial game as others played it; that's why you are here."

It took Mr. Stanwood a minute to get that, and having it it was a tremendous thing to think about. He thought about it for a long time. It had a tremendously placating influence. Finally he favoured the Lieutenant with one sidelong glance, and fussed with some papers on his desk.

"I suppose," he said with dangerous deliberation, "you consider yourself perfectly able to take care of a wife?"

Lieutenant Faulkner's heart leaped.

"I do," he said firmly.

"And what, may I inquire, is your income?"

"Eighteen hundred dollars a year!"

"Eighteen hundred dollars a——' and Mr. Stanwood was on his feet, raving again. "Eighteen hundred dollars a year!" he repeated. "Why, confound it, sir, my butler makes more than that."

"Any other man may if he is sufficiently lacking in self-respect," remarked the Lieutenant.

The millionaire was facing him with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"Your confounded impertinence!" he raged. "Do you know what it costs to run this house? One thousand dollars a day, sir. How far could you go with that?"

The Lieutenant glanced about the sumptuous apartment.

"I'm afraid it wouldn't be much longer than three o'clock to-morrow afternoon," he remarked, and he arose. "I think I understand," he added. "You prefer to make your daughter's marriage a financial proposition.

Mr. Stanwood grew suddenly, dangerously calm.

"There is nothing further to be said," he went on. "The thing is utterly preposterous." He indicated the door with a sweep of his hand.

"Before I go I'll just add that I came to you as a personal favour to you," Lieutenant Faulkner said slowly. "I wanted to feel that I had complied with the conventions. When one does that one's self-respect is flattered.

"Personal favour to me," Mr. Stanwood repeated. "And please do me another. Don't ever call here again."

"I never shall—until you invite me," replied Lieutenant Faulkner.

XIV.

(Being a literal report of a conversation over the telephone between Mr Fulton Stanwood, millionaire, and General Underwood, U.S.A.)

"Hello!"

"Hello! That General Underwood?"

"Yes."

"I'm Mr. Stanwood—Mr. Fulton Stanwood, of Wall Street."

"Well?"

"Who in the —— is this Lieutenant Robert E. Lee Faulkner?"

"Who in the ——— do you think you are talking to?"

"This is General Underwood, isn't it?"

"Yes, not a flunkey, as you evidently imagine!"

"Well, I am Mr. Fulton Stanwood, of Wall Street, and ——"

"I don't care if you're Croesus. Don't talk to me like that. What do you want?"