

Crisis, the — Volume 04 eBook

Crisis, the — Volume 04 by Winston Churchill

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AN EXCURSION

I am going ahead two years. Two years during which a nation struggled in agony with sickness, and even the great strength with which she was endowed at birth was not equal to the task of throwing it off. In 1620 a Dutch ship had brought from Guinea to his Majesty's Colony of Virginia the germs of that disease for which the Nation's blood was to be let so freely. During these years signs of dissolution, of death, were not wanting.

In the city by the Father of Waters where the races met, men and women were born into the world, who were to die in ancient Cuba, who were to be left fatherless in the struggle soon to come, who were to live to see new monsters rise to gnaw at the vitals of the Republic, and to hear again the cynical laugh of Europe. But they were also to see their country a power in the world, perchance the greatest power. While Europe had wrangled, the child of the West had grown into manhood and taken a seat among the highest, to share with them the responsibilities of manhood.

Meanwhile, Stephen Brice had been given permission to practise law in the sovereign state of Missouri. Stephen understood Judge Whipple better. It cannot be said that he was intimate with that rather formidable personage, although the Judge, being a man of habits, had formed that of taking tea at least once a week with Mrs. Brice. Stephen had learned to love the Judge, and he had never ceased to be grateful to him for a knowledge of that man who had had the most influence upon his life, —Abraham Lincoln.

For the seed, sowed in wisdom and self-denial, was bearing fruit. The sound of gathering conventions was in the land, and the Freeport Heresy was not for gotten.

We shall not mention the number of clients thronging to Mr. Whipple's office to consult Mr. Brice. These things are humiliating. Some of Stephen's income came from articles in the newspapers of that day. What funny newspapers they were, the size of a blanket! No startling headlines such as we see now, but a continued novel among the advertisements on the front page and verses from some gifted lady of the town, signed Electra. And often a story of pure love, but more frequently of ghosts or other eerie phenomena taken from a magazine, or an anecdote of a cat or a chicken. There were letters from citizens who had the mania of print, bulletins of different ages from all parts of the Union, clippings out of day-before-yesterday's newspaper of Chicago or Cincinnati to three-weeks letters from San Francisco, come by the pony post to Lexington and then down the swift Missouri. Of course, there was news by telegraph, but that was precious as fine gold,—not to be lightly read and cast aside.

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In the autumn of '59, through the kindness of Mr. Brinsmade, Stephen had gone on a steamboat up the river to a great convention in Iowa. On this excursion was much of St. Louis's bluest blood. He widened his circle of acquaintances, and spent much of his time walking the guards between Miss Anne Brinsmade and Miss Puss Russell. Perhaps it is unfair to these young ladies to repeat what they said about Stephen in the privacy of their staterooms, gentle Anne remonstrating that they should not gossip, and listening eagerly the while, and laughing at Miss Puss, whose mimicry of Stephen's severe ways brought tears to her eyes.

Mr. Clarence Colfax was likewise on the boat, and passing Stephen on the guards, bowed distantly. But once, on the return trip, when Stephen had a writing pad on his knee, the young Southerner came up to him in his frankest manner and with an expression of the gray eyes which was not to be withstood.

"Making a case, Brice?" he said. "I hear you are the kind that cannot be idle even on a holiday."

"Not as bad as all that," replied Stephen, smiling at him.

"Reckon you keep a diary, then," said Clarence, leaning against the rail. He made a remarkably graceful figure, Stephen thought. He was tall, and his movements had what might be called a commanding indolence. Stephen, while he smiled, could not but admire the tone and gesture with which Colfax bade a passing negro to get him a handkerchief from his cabin. The alacrity of the black to do the errand was amusing enough. Stephen well knew it had not been such if he wanted a handkerchief.

Stephen said it was not a diary. Mr. Colfax was too well bred to inquire further; so he never found out that Mr. Brice was writing an account of the Convention and the speechmaking for the Missouri Democrat.

"Brice," said the Southerner, "I want to apologize for things I've done to you and said about you. I hated you for a long time after you beat me out of Hester, and—" he hesitated.

Stephen looked up. For the first time he actually liked Colfax. He had been long enough among Colfax's people to understand how difficult it was for him to say the thing he wished.

"You may remember a night at my uncle's, Colonel Carvel's, on the occasion of my cousin's birthday?"

"Yes," said Stephen, in surprise.

"Well," blurted Clarence, boyishly, "I was rude to you in my uncle's house, and I have since been sorry."



“He held out his hand, and Stephen took it warmly.

“I was younger then, Mr. Colfax,” he said, “and I didn’t understand your point of view as well as I do now. Not that I have changed my ideas,” he added quickly, “but the notion of the girl’s going South angered me. I was bidding against the dealer rather than against you. Had I then known Miss Carvel—” he stopped abruptly.

The winning expression died from the face of the other.



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He turned away, and leaning across the rail, stared at the high bluffs, red-bronzed by the autumn sun. A score of miles beyond that precipice was a long low building of stone, surrounded by spreading trees,—the school for young ladies, celebrated throughout the West, where our mothers and grandmothers were taught,—Monticello. Hither Miss Virginia Carvel had gone, some thirty days since, for her second winter.

Perhaps Stephen guessed the thought in the mind of his companion, for he stared also. The music in the cabin came to an abrupt pause, and only the tumbling of waters through the planks of the great wheels broke the silence. They were both startled by laughter at their shoulders. There stood Miss Russell, the picture of merriment, her arm locked in Anne Brinsmade's.

"It is the hour when all devout worshippers turn towards the East," she said. "The goddess is enshrined at Monticello."

Both young men, as they got to their feet, were crimson. Whereupon Miss Russell laughed again. Anne, however, blushed for them. But this was not the first time Miss Russell had gone too far. Young Mr. Colfax, with the excess of manner which was his at such times, excused himself and left abruptly. This to the further embarrassment of Stephen and Anne, and the keener enjoyment of Miss Russell.

"Was I not right, Mr. Brice?" she demanded. "Why, you are even writing verses to her!"

"I scarcely know Miss Carvel," he said, recovering. "And as for writing verse—"

"You never did such a thing in your life! I can well believe it."

Miss Russell made a face in the direction Colfax had taken.

"He always acts like that when you mention her," she said.

"But you are so cruel, Puss," said Anne. "You can't blame him."

"Hairpins!" said Miss Russell.

"Isn't she to marry him?" said Stephen, in his natural voice.

He remembered his pronouns too late.

"That has been the way of the world ever since Adam and Eve," remarked Puss. "I suppose you meant to ask: Mr. Brice, whether Clarence is to marry Virginia Carvel."

Anne nudged her.

"My dear, what will Mr. Brice think of us?"



“Listen, Mr. Brice,” Puss continued, undaunted. “I shall tell you some gossip. Virginia was sent to Monticello, and went with her father to Kentucky and Pennsylvania this summer, that she might be away from Clarence. Colfax.”

“Oh, Puss!” cried Anne.

Miss Russell paid not the slightest heed.

“Colonel Carvel is right,” she went on. “I should do the same thing. They are first cousins, and the Colonel doesn’t like that. I am fond of Clarence. But he isn’t good for anything in the world except horse racing and—and fighting. He wanted to help drive the Black Republican emigrants out of Kansas, and his mother had to put a collar and chain on him. He wanted to go filibustering with Walker, and she had to get down on her knees. And yet,” she cried, “if you Yankees push us as far as war, Mr. Brice, just look out for him.”



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“But—” Anne interposed.

“Oh, I know what you are going to say,—that Clarence has money.”

“Puss!” cried Anne, outraged. “How dare you!”

Miss Russell slipped an arm around her waist.

“Come, Anne,” she said, “we mustn’t interrupt the Senator any longer. He is preparing his maiden speech.”

That was the way in which Stephen got his nickname. It is scarcely necessary to add that he wrote no more until he reached his little room in the house on Olive Street.

They had passed Alton, and the black cloud that hung in the still autumn air over the city was in sight. It was dusk when the ‘Jackson’ pushed her nose into the levee, and the song of the negro stevedores rose from below as they pulled the gang-plank on to the landing-stage. Stephen stood apart on the hurricane deck, gazing at the dark line of sooty warehouses. How many young men with their way to make have felt the same as he did after some pleasant excursion. The presence of a tall form beside him shook him from his reverie, and he looked up to recognize the benevolent face of Mr. Brinsmade.

“Mrs. Brice may be anxious, Stephen, at the late hour,” said he. “My carriage is here, and it will give me great pleasure to convey you to your door.”

Dear Mr. Brinsmade! He is in heaven now, and knows at last the good he wrought upon earth. Of the many thoughtful charities which Stephen received from him, this one sticks firmest in his remembrance: A stranger, tired and lonely, and apart from the gay young men and women who stepped from the boat, he had been sought out by this gentleman, to whom had been given the divine gift of forgetting none.

“Oh, Puss,” cried Anne, that evening, for Miss Russell had come to spend the night, “how could you have talked to him so? He scarcely spoke on the way up in the carriage. You have offended him.”

“Why should I set him upon a pedestal?” said Puss, with a thread in her mouth; “why should you all set him upon a pedestal? He is only a Yankee,” said Puss, tossing her head, “and not so very wonderful.”

“I did not say he was wonderful,” replied Anne, with dignity.

“But you girls think him so. Emily and Eugenie and Maude. He had better marry Belle Cluyne. A great man, he may give some decision to that family. Anne!”

“Yes.”

“Shall I tell you a secret?”

“Yes,” said Anne. She was human, and she was feminine.

“Then—Virginia Carvel is in love with him.”

“With Mr. Brice!” cried astonished Anne. “She hates him!”

“She thinks she hates him,” said Miss Russell, calmly.

Anne looked up at her companion admiringly. Her two heroines were Puss and Virginia. Both had the same kind of daring, but in Puss the trait had developed into a somewhat disagreeable outspokenness which made many people dislike her. Her judgments were usually well founded, and her prophecies had so often come to pass that Anne often believed in them for no other reason.



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“How do you know?” said Anne, incredulously.

“Do you remember that September, a year ago, when we were all out at Glencoe, and Judge Whipple was ill, and Virginia sent us all away and nursed him herself?”

“Yes,” said Anne.

“And did you know that Mr. Brice had gone out, with letters, when the Judge was better?”

“Yes,” said Anne, breathless.

“It was a Saturday afternoon that he left, although they had begged him to stay over Sunday. Virginia had written for me to come back, and I arrived in the evening. I asked Easter where Jinny was, and I found her —”

“You found her—?” said Anne.

Sitting alone in the summer-house over the river. Easter said she had been there for two hours. And I have never known Jinny to be such miserable company as she was that night.”

“Did she mention Stephen?” asked Anne.

“No.”

“But you did,” said Anne, with conviction.

Miss Russell’s reply was not as direct as usual.

“You know Virginia never confides unless she wants to,” she said.

Anne considered.

“Virginia has scarcely seen him since then,” she said. “You know that I was her roommate at Monticello last year, and I think I should have discovered it.”

“Did she speak of him?” demanded Miss Russell.

“Only when the subject was mentioned. I heard her repeat once what Judge Whipple told her father of him; that he had a fine legal mind. He was often in my letters from home, because they have taken Pa’s house next door, and because Pa likes them. I used to read those letters to Jinny,” said Anne, “but she never expressed any desire to hear them.”

“I, too, used to write Jinny about him,” confessed Puss.



“Did she answer your letter?”

“No,” replied Miss Puss,—“but that was just before the holidays, you remember. And then the Colonel hurried her off to see her Pennsylvania relatives, and I believe they went to Annapolis, too, where the Carvels come from.”

Stephen, sitting in the next house, writing out his account, little dreamed that he was the subject of a conference in the third story front of the Brinsmades'. Later, when the young ladies were asleep, he carried his manuscript to the Democrat office, and delivered it into the hands of his friend, the night editor, who was awaiting it.

Toward the end of that week, Miss Virginia Carvel was sitting with her back to one of the great trees at Monticello reading a letter. Every once in a while she tucked it under her cloak and glanced hastily around. It was from Miss Anne Brinsmade.



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“I have told you all about the excursion, my dear, and how we missed you. You may remember” (ah, Anne, the guile there is in the best of us), “you may remember Mr. Stephen Brice, whom we used to speak of. Pa and Ma take a great interest in him, and Pa had him invited on the excursion. He is more serious than ever, since he has become a full-fledged lawyer. But he has a dry humor which comes out when you know him well, of which I did not suspect him. His mother is the dearest lady I have ever known, so quiet, so dignified, and so well bred. They come in to supper very often. And the other night Mr. Brice told Pa so many things about the people south of Market Street, the Germans, which he did not know; that Pa was astonished. He told all about German history, and how they were persecuted at home, and why they came here. Pa was surprised to hear that many of them were University men, and that they were already organizing to defend the Union. I heard Pa say, ‘That is what Mr. Blair meant when he assured me that we need not fear for the city.’

“Jinny dear, I ought not to have written you this, because you are for Secession, and in your heart you think Pa a traitor, because he comes from a slave state and has slaves of his own. But I shall not tear it up.

“It is sad to think how rich Mrs. Brice lived in Boston, and what she has had to come to. One servant and a little house, and no place to go to in the summer, when they used to have such a large one. I often go in to sew with her, but she has never once mentioned her past to me.

“Your father has no doubt sent you the Democrat with the account of the Convention. It is the fullest published, by far, and was so much admired that Pa asked the editor who wrote it. Who do you think, but Stephen Brice! So now Pa knows why Mr. Brice hesitated when Pa asked him to go up the river, and then consented. This is not the end. Yesterday, when I went in to see Mrs. Brice, a new black silk was on her bed, and as long as I live I shall never forget how sweet was her voice when she said, ‘It is a surprise from my son, my dear. I did not expect ever to have another.’ Jinny, I just know he bought it with the money he got for the article. That was what he was writing on the boat when Clarence Colfax interrupted him. Puss accused him of writing verses to you.”

At this point Miss Virginia Carvel stopped reading. Whether she had read that part before, who shall say? But she took Anne’s letter between her fingers and tore it into bits and flung the bits into the wind, so that they were tossed about and lost among the dead leaves under the great trees. And when she reached her room, there was the hated Missouri Democrat lying, still open, on her table. A little later a great black piece of it came tossing out of the chimney above, to the affright of little Miss Brown, teacher of Literature, who was walking in the grounds, and who ran to the principal’s room with the story that the chimney was afire.



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CHAPTER VIII

THE COLONEL IS WARNED

It is difficult to refrain from mention of the leave-taking of Miss Virginia Carvel from the Monticello "Female Seminary," so called in the 'Democrat'. Most young ladies did not graduate in those days. There were exercises. Stephen chanced to read in the 'Republican' about these ceremonies, which mentioned that Miss Virginia Carvel, "Daughter of Colonel Comyn Carvel, was without doubt the beauty of the day. She wore —" but why destroy the picture? I have the costumes under my hand. The words are meaningless to all males, and young women might laugh at a critical time. Miss Emily Russell performed upon "that most superb of all musical instruments the human voice." Was it 'Auld Robin Gray' that she sang? I am sure it was Miss Maude Catherwood who recited 'To My Mother', with such effect. Miss Carvel, so Stephen learned with alarm, was to read a poem by Mrs. Browning, but was "unavoidably prevented." The truth was, as he heard afterward from Miss Puss Russell, that Miss Jinny had refused point blank. So the Lady Principal, to save her reputation for discipline, had been forced to deceive the press.

There was another who read the account of the exercises with intense interest, a gentleman of whom we have lately forborne to speak. This is Mr. Eliphalet Hopper. Eliphalet has prospered. It is to be doubted if that somewhat easy-going gentleman, Colonel Carvel, realized the full importance of Eliphalet to Carvel & Company. Mr. Hood had been superseded. Ephum still opened the store in the mornings, but Mr. Hopper was within the ground-glass office before the place was warm, and through warerooms and shipping rooms, rubbing his hands, to see if any were late. Many of the old force were missed, and a new and greater force were come in. These feared Eliphalet as they did the devil, and worked the harder to please him, because Eliphalet had hired that kind. To them the Colonel was lifted high above the sordid affairs of the world. He was at the store every day in the winter, and Mr. Hopper always followed him obsequiously into the ground-glass office, called in the book-keeper, and showed him the books and the increased earnings.

The Colonel thought of Mr. Hood and his slovenly management, and sighed, in spite of his doubled income. Mr. Hopper had added to the Company's list of customers whole districts in the growing Southwest, and yet the honest Colonel did not like him. Mr. Hopper, by a gradual process, had taken upon his own shoulders, and consequently off the Colonel's, responsibility after responsibility. There were some painful scenes, of course, such as the departure of Mr. Hood, which never would have occurred had not Eliphalet proved without question the incapacity of the ancient manager. Mr. Hopper only narrowed his lids when the Colonel pensioned Mr. Hood. But the Colonel had a will before which, when roused, even Mr. Hopper trembled. So that Eliphalet was always polite to Ephum, and careful never to say anything in the darkey's presence against

incompetent clerks or favorite customers, who, by the charity of the Colonel, remained on his books.



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One spring day, after the sober home-coming of Colonel Carvel from the Democratic Convention at Charleston, Ephum accosted his master as he came into the store of a morning. Ephum's face was working with excitement.

"What's the matter with you, Ephum?" asked the Colonel, kindly. "You haven't been yourself lately."

"No, Marsa, I ain't 'zactly."

Ephum put down the duster, peered out of the door of the private office, and closed it softly.

"Marse Comyn?"

"Yes?"

"Marse Comyn, I ain't got no use fo' dat Misteh Hoppa', Ise kinder sup'stitious 'bout him, Marsa."

The Colonel put down his newspaper.

"Has he treated you badly, Ephum?" he asked quietly.

The faithful negro saw another question in his master's face. He well knew that Colonel Carvel would not descend to ask an inferior concerning the conduct of a superior.

"Oh no, suh. And I ain't sayin' nuthin' gin his honesty. He straight, but he powerful sharp, Marse Comyn. An' he jus' mussiless down to a cent."

The Colonel sighed. He realized that which was beyond the grasp of the negro's mind. New and thriftier methods of trade from New England were fast replacing the old open-handedness of the large houses. Competition had begun, and competition is cruel. Edwards, James, & Company had taken a Yankee into the firm. They were now Edwards, James, & Doddington, and Mr. Edwards's coolness towards the Colonel was manifest since the rise of Eliphalet. They were rivals now instead of friends. But Colonel Carvel did not know until after years that Mr. Hopper had been offered the place which Mr. Doddington filled later.

As for Mr. Hopper, increase of salary had not changed him. He still lived in the same humble way, in a single room in Miss Crane's boarding-house, and he paid very little more for his board than he had that first week in which he swept out Colonel Carvel's store. He was superintendent, now, of Mr. Davitt's Sunday School, and a church officer. At night, when he came home from business, he would read the widow's evening paper, and the Colonel's morning paper at the office. Of true Puritan abstemiousness, his only indulgence was chewing tobacco. It was as early as 1859



that the teller of the Boatman's Bank began to point out Mr. Hopper's back to casual customers, and he was more than once seen to enter the president's room, which had carpet on the floor.

Eliphalet's suavity with certain delinquent customers from the Southwest was A wording to Scripture. When they were profane, and invited him into the street, he reminded them that the city had a police force and a jail. While still a young man, he had a manner of folding his hands and smiling which is peculiar to capitalists, and he knew the laws concerning mortgages in several different states.

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But Eliphalet was content still to remain in the sphere in which Providence had placed him, and so to be an example for many of us. He did not buy, or even hire, an evening suit. He was pleased to superintend some of the details for a dance at Christmas-time before Virginia left Monticello, but he sat as usual on the stair-landing. There Mr. Jacob Cluyme (who had been that day in conversation with the teller of the Boatman's Bank) chanced upon him. Mr. Cluyme was so charmed at the facility with which Eliphalet recounted the rise and fall of sugar and cotton and wheat that he invited Mr. Hopper to dinner. And from this meal may be reckoned the first appearance of the family of which Eliphalet Hopper was the head into polite society. If the Cluyme household was not polite, it was nothing. Eliphalet sat next to Miss Belle, and heard the private history of many old families, which he cherished for future use. Mrs. Cluyme apologized for the dinner, which (if the truth were told) needed an apology. All of which is significant, but sordid and uninteresting. Jacob Cluyme usually bought stocks before a rise.

There was only one person who really bothered Eliphalet as he rose into prominence, and that person was Captain Elijah Brent. If, upon entering the ground-glass office, he found Eliphalet without the Colonel, Captain Lige would walk out again just as if the office were empty. The inquiries he made were addressed always to Ephum. Once, when Mr. Hopper had bidden him good morning and pushed a chair toward him, the honest Captain had turned his back and marched straight to the house or Tenth Street, where he found the Colonel alone at breakfast. The Captain sat down opposite.

"Colonel," said he, without an introduction. "I don't like this here business of letting Hopper run your store. He's a fish, I tell you."

The Colonel drank his coffee in silence.

"Lige," he said gently, "he's nearly doubled my income. It isn't the old times, when we all went our own way and kept our old customers year in and year out. You know that."

The Captain took a deep draught of the coffee which Jackson had laid before him.

"Colonel Carvel," he said emphatically, "the fellow's a damned rascal, and will ruin you yet if you don't take advice."

The Colonel shifted uneasily.

"The books show that he's honest, Lige."

"Yes," cried Lige, with his fist on the table. "Honest to a mill. But if that fellow ever gets on top of you, or any one else, he'll grind you into dust."

"He isn't likely to get on top of me, Lige. I know the business, and keep watch. And now that Jinny's coming home from Monticello, I feel that I can pay more attention to her—kind of take her mother's place," said the Colonel, putting on his felt hat and tipping

his chair. “Lige, I want that girl to have every advantage. She ought to go to Europe and see the world. That trip East last summer did her a heap of good. When we were at Calvert House, Dan read her something that my grandfather had written about London, and she was regularly fired. First I must take her to the Eastern Shore to see Carvel Hall. Dan still owns it. Now it’s London and Paris.”



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The Captain walked over to the window, and said nothing. He did not see the searching gray eyes of his old friend upon him.

“Lige!” said the Colonel.

The Captain turned.

“Lige, why don’t you give up steamboating and come along to Europe? You’re not forty yet, and you have a heap of money laid by.”

The Captain shook his head with the vigor that characterized him.

“This ain’t no time for me to leave,” he said. “Colonel; I tell you there’s a storm comin’.”

The Colonel pulled his goatee uneasily. Here, at last, was a man in whom there was no guile.

“Lige,” he said, “isn’t it about time you got married?”

Upon which the Captain shook his head again, even with more vigor. He could not trust himself to speak. After the Christmas holidays he had driven Virginia across the frozen river, all the way to Monticello, in a sleigh. It was night when they had reached the school, the light of its many windows casting long streaks on the snow under the trees. He had helped her out, and had taken her hand as she stood on the step.

“Be good, Jinny,” he had said. “Remember what a short time it will be until June. And your Pa will come over to see you.”

She had seized him by the buttons of his great coat, and said tearfully: “O Captain Lige! I shall be so lonely when you are away. Aren’t you going to kiss me?”

He had put his lips to her forehead, driven madly back to Alton, and spent the night. The first thing he did the next day when he reached St. Louis was to go straight to the Colonel and tell him bluntly of the circumstance.

“Lige, I’d hate to give her up,” Mr. Carvel said; “but I’d rather you’d marry her than any man I can think of.”

CHAPTER IX

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

In that spring of 1860 the time was come for the South to make her final stand. And as the noise of gathering conventions shook the ground, Stephen Brice was not the only



one who thought of the Question at Freeport. The hour was now at hand for it to bear fruit.

Meanwhile, his hero, the hewer of rails and forger of homely speech, Abraham Lincoln, had made a little tour eastward the year before, and had startled Cooper Union with a new logic and a new eloquence. They were the same logic and the same eloquence which had startled Stephen.

Even as he predicted who had given it birth, the Question destroyed the great Democratic Party. Colonel Carvel travelled to the convention in historic Charleston soberly and fearing God, as many another Southern gentleman. In old Saint Michael's they knelt to pray for harmony, for peace; for a front bold and undismayed toward those who wronged them. All through the week chosen orators wrestled in vain. Judge Douglas, you flattered yourself that you had evaded the Question. Do you see the Southern delegates rising in their seats? Alabama leaves the hall, followed by her sister stakes. The South has not forgotten your Freeport Heresy. Once she loved you now she will have none of you.

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Gloomily, indeed, did Colonel Carvel return home. He loved the Union and the flag for which his grandfather Richard had fought so bravely. That flag was his inheritance. So the Judge, laying his hand upon the knee of his friend, reminded him gravely. But the Colonel shook his head. The very calmness of their argument had been portentous.

“No, Whipple,” said he. “You are a straightforward man. You can’t disguise it. You of the North are bent upon taking away from us the rights we had when our fathers framed the Constitution. However the nigger got to this country, sir, in your Bristol and Newport traders, as well as in our Virginia and Maryland ships, he is here, and he was here when the Constitution was written. He is happier in slavery than are your factory hands in New England; and he is no more fit to exercise the solemn rights of citizenship, I say, than the halfbreeds in the South American states.”

The Judge attempted to interrupt, but Mr. Carvel stopped him.

“Suppose you deprive me of my few slaves, you do not ruin me. Yet you do me as great a wrong as you do my friend Samuels, of Louisiana, who depends on the labor of five hundred. Shall I stand by selfishly and see him ruined, and thousands of others like him?”

Profoundly depressed, Colonel Carvel did not attend the adjourned Convention at Baltimore, which split once more on Mason and Dixon’s line. The Democrats of the young Northwest stood for Douglas and Johnson, and the solid South, in another hall, nominated Breckenridge and Lane. This, of course, became the Colonel’s ticket.

What a Babel of voices was raised that summer! Each with its cure for existing ills. Between the extremes of the Black Republican Negro Worshippers and the Southern Rights party of Breckenridge, your conservative had the choice of two candidates,—of Judge Douglas or Senator Bell. A most respectable but practically extinct body of gentlemen in ruffled shirts, the Old Line Whigs, had likewise met in Baltimore. A new name being necessary, they called themselves Constitutional Unionists Senator Bell was their candidate, and they proposed to give the Nation soothing-syrup. So said Judge Whipple, with a grunt of contempt, to Mr. Cluyme, who was then a prominent Constitutional Unionist. Other and most estimable gentlemen were also Constitutional Unionists, notably Mr. Calvin Brinsmade. Far be it from any one to cast disrespect upon the reputable members of this party, whose broad wings sheltered likewise so many weak brethren.

One Sunday evening in May, the Judge was taking tea with Mrs. Brice. The occasion was memorable for more than one event—which was that he addressed Stephen by his first name for the first time.

“You’re an admirer of Abraham Lincoln,” he had said.

Stephen, used to Mr. Whipple's ways, smiled quietly at his mother. He had never dared mention to the Judge his suspicions concerning his journey to Springfield and Freeport.



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“Stephen,” said the Judge (here the surprise came in), “Stephen, what do you think of Mr. Lincoln’s chances for the Republican nomination?”

“We hear of no name but Seward’s, sir,” said Stephen, When he had recovered.

The Judge grunted.

“Do you think that Lincoln would make a good President?” he added.

“I have thought so, sir, ever since you were good enough to give me the opportunity of knowing him.”

It was a bold speech—the Judge drew his great eyebrows together, but he spoke to Mrs. Brice.

“I’m not as strong as I was once, ma’am,” said he. “And yet I am going to that Chicago convention.”

Mrs. Brice remonstrated mildly, to the effect that he had done his share of political work. He scarcely waited for her to finish.

“I shall take a younger man with me, in case anything happens. In fact, ma’am, I had thought of taking your son, if you can spare him.”

And so it was that Stephen went to that most dramatic of political gatherings,—in the historic Wigwam. It was so that his eyes were opened to the view of the monster which maims the vitality of the Republic, —the political machine. Mr. Seward had brought his machine from New York, —a legion prepared to fill the Wigwam with their bodies, and to drown with their cries all names save that of their master.

Stephen indeed had his eyes opened. Through the kindness of Judge Whipple he heard many quiet talks between that gentleman and delegates from other states—- Pennsylvania and Illinois and Indiana and elsewhere. He perceived that the Judge was no nonentity in this new party. Mr. Whipple sat in his own room, and the delegates came and ranged themselves along the bed. Late one night, when the delegates were gone, Stephen ventured to speak what was in his mind.

“Mr. Lincoln did not strike me as the kind of man, sir; who would permit a bargain.”

“Mr. Lincoln’s at home playing barn-ball,” said the Judge, curtly. “He doesn’t expect the nomination.”

“Then,” said Stephen, rather hotly, “I think you are unfair to him.”

You are expecting the Judge to thunder. Sometimes he liked this kind of speech.



“Stephen, I hope that politics may be a little cleaner when you become a delegate,” he answered, with just the suspicion of a smile. “Supposing you are convinced that Abraham Lincoln is the only man who can save the Union, and supposing that the one way to get him nominated is to meet Seward’s gang with their own methods, what would you do, sir? I want a practical proposition, sir,” said Mr. Whipple, “one that we can use to-night. It is now one ’clock.”

As Stephen was silent, the Judge advised him to go to bed. And the next morning, while Mr. Seward’s henchmen, confident and uproarious, were parading the streets of Chicago with their bands and their bunting, the vast Wigwam was quietly filling up with bony Westerners whose ally was none other than the state of Pennsylvania. These gentlemen possessed wind which they had not wasted in processions. And the Lord delivered Seward and all that was his into their hands.



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How the light of Mr. Seward's hope went out after the first ballot, and how some of the gentlemen attached to his person wept; and how the voices shook the Wigwam, and the thunder of the guns rolled over the tossing water of the lake, many now living remember. That day a name was delivered to the world through the mouths political schemers which was destined to enter history that of the saviour of the Nation.

Down in little Springfield, on a vacant lot near the station, a tall man in his shirt sleeves was playing barn-ball with some boys. The game finished, he had put on his black coat and was starting homeward under the tree—when a fleet youngster darted after him with a telegram. The tall man read it, and continued on his walk his head bent and his feet taking long strides, Later in the day he was met by a friend.

“Abe,” said the friend, “I’m almighty glad there somebody in this town’s got notorious at last.”

In the early morning of their return from Chicago Judge Whipple and Stephen were standing in the front of a ferry-boat crossing the Mississippi. The sun was behind them. The Judge had taken off his hat, and his gray hair was stirred by the river breeze. Illness had set a yellow seal on the face, but the younger man remarked it not. For Stephen, staring at the black blur of the city outline, was filled with a strange exaltation which might have belonged to his Puritan forefathers. Now at length was come his chance to be of use in life,—to dedicate the labor of his hands and of his brains to Abraham Lincoln uncouth prophet of the West. With all his might he would work to save the city for the man who was the hope of the Union.

The bell rang. The great paddles scattered the brow waters with white foam, and the Judge voiced his thoughts.

“Stephen,” said he, “I guess we’ll have to put on shoulders to the wheel this summer. If Lincoln is not elected I have lived my sixty-five years for nothing.”

As he descended the plank, he laid a hand on Stephen’s arm, and tottered. The big Louisiana, Captain Brent’s boat, just in from New Orleans, was blowing off her steam as with slow steps they climbed the levee and the steep pitch of the street beyond it. The clatter of hooves and the crack of whips reached their ears, and, like many others before them and since, they stepped into Carvel & Company’s. On the inside of the glass partition of the private office, a voice of great suavity was heard. It was Eliphalet Hopper’s.

“If you will give me the numbers of the bales, Captain Brent, I’ll send a dray down to your boat and get them.”

It was a very decisive voice that answered.



“No, sir, I prefer to do business with my friend, Colonel Carvel. I guess I can wait.”

“I could sell the goods to Texas buyers who are here in the store right now.”

“Until I get instructions from one of the concern,” vowed Captain Lige, “I shall do as I always have done, sir. What is your position here, Mr. Hopper?”



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"I am manager, I callate."

The Captain's fist was heard to come down on the desk.

"You don't manage me," he said, "and I reckon you don't manage the Colonel."

Mr. Hopper's face was not pleasant to see as he emerged. But at sight of Judge Whipple on the steps his suavity returned.

"The Colonel will be in any minute, sir," said he.

But the Judge walked past him without reply, and into the office. Captain Brent, seeing him; sprang to his feet.

"Well, well, Judge," said he, heartily, "you fellows have done it now, sure. I'll say this for you, you've picked a smart man."

"Better vote for him, Lige," said the Judge, setting down.

The Captain smiled at Stephen.

"A man's got a lot of choice this year;" said he. "Two governments, thirty-three governments, one government patched up for a year ox two."

"Or no government," finished the Judge. "Lige, you're not such a fool as to vote against the Union?"

"Judge," said the Captain, instantly, "I'm not the only one in this town who will have to decide whether my sympathies are wrong. My sympathies are with the South."

"It's not a question of sympathy, Captain," answered the Judge, dryly. "Abraham Lincoln himself was born in Kentucky."

They had not heard a step without.

"Gentlemen, mark my words. If Abraham Lincoln is elected, the South leaves this Union."

The Judge started, and looked up. The speaker was Colonel Carvel himself.

"Then, sir," Mr. Whipple cried hotly, "then you will be chastised and brought back. For at last we have chosen a man who is strong enough, —who does not fear your fire-eaters, —whose electors depend on Northern votes alone."



Stephen rose apprehensively, So did Captain Lige The Colonel had taken a step forward, and a fire was quick to kindle in his gray eyes. It was as quick to die. Judge Whipple, deathly pale, staggered and fell into Stephen' arms. But it was the Colonel who laid him on the horsehair sofa.

“Silas!” he said, “Silas!”

Nor could the two who listened sound the depth of the pathos the Colonel put into those two words.

But the Judge had not fainted. And the brusqueness in his weakened voice was even more pathetic— “Tut, tut,” said he. “A little heat, and no breakfast.”

The Colonel already had a bottle of the famous Bourbon day his hand, and Captain Lige brought a glass of muddy iced water. Mr. Carvel made an injudicious mixture of the two, and held it to the lips of his friend. He was pushed away.

“Come, Silas,” he said.

“No!” cried the Judge, and with this effort he slipped back again. Those who stood there thought that the stamp of death was already on Judge Whipple's face.

But the lips were firmly closed, bidding defiance, as ever, to the world. The Colonel, stroking his goatee, regarded him curiously.



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“Silas,” he said slowly, “if you won’t drink it for me, perhaps you will drink it—for—
Abraham—Lincoln.”

The two who watched that scene have never forgotten it. Outside, in the great cool store, the rattle of the trucks was heard, and Mr. Hopper giving commands. Within was silence. The straight figure of the Colonel towered above the sofa while he waited. A full minute passed. Once Judge Whipple’s bony hand opened and shut, and once his features worked. Then, without warning, he sat up.

“Colonel,” said he, “I reckon I wouldn’t be much use to Abe if I took that. But if you’ll send Ephum after, cup of coffee—”

Mr. Carvel set the glass down. In two strides he had reached the door and given the order. Then he came hack and seated himself on the sofa.

Stephen found his mother at breakfast. He had forgotten the convention He told her what had happened at Mr. Carvel’s store, and how the Colonel had tried to persuade Judge Whipple to take the Glencoe house while he was in Europe, and how the Judge had refused. Tears were in the widow’s eyes when Stephen finished.

“And he means to stay here in the heat and go through, the campaign?” she asked.

“He says that he will not stir.”

“It will kill him, Stephen,” Mrs. Brice faltered.

“So the Colonel told him. And he said that he would die willingly—after Abraham Lincoln was elected. He had nothing to live for but to fight for that. He had never understood the world, and had quarrelled with at all his life.”

‘He said that to Colonel Carvel?’

“Yes.”

“Stephen!”

He didn’t dare to look at his mother, nor she at him. And when he reached the office, half an hour later, Mr. Whipple was seated in his chair, defiant and unapproachable. Stephen sighed as he settled down to his work. The thought of one who might have accomplished what her father could not was in his head. She was at Monticello.

Some three weeks later Mr. Brinsmade’s buggy drew up at Mrs. Brice’s door. The Brinsmade family had been for some time in the country. And frequently, when that gentleman was detained in town by business, he would stop at the little home for tea.



The secret of the good man's visit came out as he sat with them on the front steps afterward.

"I fear that it will be a hot summer, ma'am," he had said to Mrs. Brice. "You should go to the country."

"The heat agrees with me remarkably, Mr. Brinsmade," said the lady, smiling.

"I have heard that Colonel Carvel wishes to rent his house at Glencoe," Mr. Brinsmade continued, "The figure is not high." He mentioned it. And it was, indeed nominal. "It struck me that a change of air would do you good, Mrs. Brice, and Stephen. Knowing that you shared in our uneasiness concerning Judge Whipple, I thought—"

He stopped, and looked at her. It was a hard task even for that best and most tactful of gentlemen, Mr. Brinsmade. He too had misjudged this calm woman.



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"I understand you, Mr. Brinsmade," she said. She saw, as did Stephen, the kindness behind the offer—Colonel Carvel's kindness and his own. The gentleman's benevolent face brightened:

"And, my dear Madam, do not let the thought of this little house trouble you. It was never my expectation to have it occupied in the summer. If we could induce the Judge to go to Glencoe with you for the summer; I am sure it would be a relief for us all."

He did not press the matter; but begged Stephen to call on him in a day or two, at the bank.

"What do you think, Stephen," asked his mother, when Mr. Brinsmade was gone, Stephen did not reply at once. What, indeed, could he say? The vision of that proud figure of Miss Virginia was before him, and he revolted. What was kindness from Colonel Carvel and Mr. Brinsmade was charity from her. He could not bear the thought of living in a house haunted by her. And yet why should he let his pride and his feelings stand in the way of the health—perhaps of the life—of Judge Whipple?

It was characteristic of his mother's strength of mind not to mention the subject again that evening. Stephen did not sleep in the hot night. But when he rose in the morning he had made up his mind. After breakfast he went straight to the Colonel's store, and fortunately found Mr. Carvel at his desk, winding up his affairs.

The next morning, when the train for the East pulled out of Illinoistown, Miss Jinny Carvel stood on the platform tearfully waving good-by to a knot of friends. She was leaving for Europe. Presently she went into the sleeping-car to join the Colonel, who wore a gray liners duster. For a long time she sat gazing at the young, corn waving on the prairie, fingering the bunch of June roses on her lap. Clarence had picked them only a few hours ago, in the dew at Bellegarde. She saw her cousin standing disconsolate under the train sheds, just as she had left him. She pictured him riding out the Bellefontaine Road that afternoon, alone. Now that the ocean was to be between them, was it love that she felt for Clarence at last? She glanced at her father. Once or twice she had suspected him of wishing to separate them. Her Aunt Lillian, indeed, had said as much, and Virginia had silenced her. But when she had asked the Colonel to take Clarence to Europe, he had refused. And yet she knew that he had begged Captain Lige to go.

Virginia had been at home but a week. She had seen the change in Clarence and exulted. The very first day she had surprised him on the porch at Bellegarde with "Hardee's tactics". From a boy Clarence had suddenly become a man with a Purpose, —and that was the Purpose of the South.

"They have dared to nominate that dirty Lincoln," he said.—"Do you think that we will submit to nigger equality rule? Never! never!" he cried. "If they elect him, I will stand

and fight them until my legs are shot from under me, and then I will shoot down the Yankees from the ground.”

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Virginia's heart had leaped within her at the words, and into her eyes had flashed once more the look for which the boy had waited and hoped in vain. He had the carriage of a soldier, the animation and endurance of the thoroughbred when roused. He was of the stuff that made the resistance of the South the marvel of the world. And well we know, whatever the sound of it, that his speech was not heroics. Nor was it love for his cousin that inspired it, save in this: he had apotheosized Virginia. To him she was the inspired goddess of the South—his country. His admiration and affection had of late been laid upon an altar. Her ambition for him he felt was likewise the South's ambition for him.

His mother, Virginia's aunt, felt this too, and strove against it with her feeble might. She never had had power over her son; nor over any man, save the temporal power of beauty. And to her mortification she found herself actually in fear of this girl who might have been her daughter. So in Virginia's presence she became more trivial and petty than ever. It was her one defence.

It had of course been a foregone conclusion that Clarence should join Company A. Few young men of family did not. And now he ran to his room to don for Virginia that glorious but useless full dress,—the high bearskin hat, the red pigeon-tailed coat, the light blue trousers, and the gorgeous, priceless shackle. Indeed, the boy looked stunning. He held his big rifle like a veteran, and his face was set with a high resolve there was no mistaking. The high color of her pride was on the cheek of the girl as he brought his piece to the salute of her, his mistress. And yet, when he was gone, and she sat alone amid the roses awaiting him, came wilfully before her another face that was relentless determination,—the face of Stephen Brice, as he had stood before her in the summer house at Glencoe. Strive as she might against the thought, deny it to herself and others, to Virginia Carvel his way become the face of the North. Her patriotism and all that was in her of race rebelled. To conquer that face she would have given her own soul, and Clarence's. Angrily she had arisen and paced the garden walks, and cried out aloud that it was not inflexible.

And now, by the car window, looking out over the endless roll of the prairie, the memory of this was bitter within her.

Suddenly she turned to her father.

"Did you rent our house at Glencoe?" she asked.

"No, Jinny."

"I suppose Mr. Brice was too proud to accept it at your charitable rent, even to save Mr, Whipple's life."

The Colonel turned to his daughter in mild surprise. She was leaning back on the seat, her eyes half closed.



“Once you dislike a person, Jinny, you never get over it. I always had a fancy for the young man, and now I have a better opinion of him than ever before. It was I who insulted them by naming that rent.”



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“What did he do?” Virginia demanded.

“He came to my office yesterday morning. ‘Colonel Carvel,’ said he, ‘I hear you wish to rent your house.’ I said yes. ‘You rented it once before, sir,’ said he. ‘Yes,’ said I. ‘May I ask you what price you got for it?’ said he.”

“And what did you say?” she asked, leaning forward.

“I told him,” said the Colonel, smiling. “But I explained that I could not expect to command that price now on short notice. He replied that they would pay it, or not consider the place.”

Virginia turned her head away and stared out over the fields.

“How could they afford it!” she murmured.

“Mr. Brinsmade tells me that young Brice won rather a remarkable case last winter, and since then has had some practice. And that he writes for the newspapers. I believe he declined some sort of an editorial position, preferring to remain at the law.”

“And so they are going into the house?” she asked presently.

“No,” said the Colonel. “Whipple refused point-blank to go to the country. He said that he would be shirking the only work of his life likely to be worth anything. So the Brices remain in town.”

Colonel Carvel sighed. But Virginia said nothing.

CHAPTER X.

RICHTER'S SCAR

This was the summer when Mr. Stephen Brice began to make his appearance in public. The very first was rather encouraging than otherwise, although they were not all so. It was at a little town on the outskirts of the city where those who had come to scoff and jeer remained to listen.

In writing that speech Stephen had striven to bear in mind a piece of advice which Mr. Lincoln had given him. “Speak so that the lowest may understand, and the rest will have no trouble.” And it had worked. At the halting lameness of the beginning an egg was thrown,—fortunately wide of the mark. After this incident Stephen fairly astonished his audience, —especially an elderly gentleman who sat on a cracker-box in the rear, out of sight of the stand. This may have been Judge Whipple, although we have no proof of the fact.



Stephen himself would not have claimed originality for that speech. He laughs now when it is spoken of, and calls it a boyish effort, which it was. I have no doubt that many of the master's phrases slipped in, as young Mr. Brice could repeat most of the Debates, and the Cooper Union speech by heart. He had caught more than the phrasing, however. So imbued was he with the spirit of Abraham Lincoln that his hearers caught it; and that was the end of the rotten eggs and the cabbages. The event is to be especially noted because they crowded around him afterward to ask questions. For one thing, he had not mentioned abolition. Wasn't it true, then, that this Lincoln wished to tear the negro from his master, give him a vote and a subsidy, and set him up as the equal of the man that owned him? "Slavery may stay where it is," cried the young orator. "If it is content there, so are we content. What we say is that it shall not go one step farther. No, not one inch into a northern territory."



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On the next occasion Mr. Brice was one of the orators at a much larger meeting in a garden in South St. Louis. The audience was mostly German. And this was even a happier event, inasmuch as Mr. Brice was able to trace with some skill the history of the Fatherland from the Napoleonic wars to its Revolution. Incidentally he told them why they had emigrated to this great and free country. And when in an inspired moment he coupled the names of Abraham Lincoln and Father Jahn, the very leaves of the trees above them trembled at their cheers.

And afterwards there was a long-remembered supper in the moonlit grove with Richter and a party of his college friends from Jena. There was Herr Tiefel with the little Dresden-blue eyes, red and round and jolly; and Hauptmann, long and thin and sallow; and Korner, redbearded and ponderous; and Konig, a little clean-cut man with a blond mustache that pointed upward. They clattered their steins on the table and sang wonderful Jena songs, while Stephen was lifted up and his soul carried off to far-away Saxony,—to the clean little University town with its towers and crooked streets. And when they sang the Trokksmelodie, “Bemooster Bursche zieh’ ich aus,—Ade!” a big tear rolled down the scar on Richter’s cheek.

“Fahrt wohl, ihr Strassen grad and krumm
Ich zieh’ nicht mehr in euch herum,
Durchton euch nicht mehr mit Gesang,
Mit Larm nicht mehr and Sporenklang.”

As the deep tones died away, the soft night was steeped in the sadness of that farewell song. It was Richter who brought the full force of it home to Stephen.

“Do you recall the day you left your Harvard, and your Boston, my friend?” he asked.

Stephen only nodded. He had never spoken of the bitterness of that, even to his mother. And here was the difference between the Saxon and the Anglo-Saxon.

Richter smoked his pipe 'mid dreamy silence, the tear still wet upon his face.

“Tiefel and I were at the University together,” he said at length. “He remembers the day I left Jena for good and all. Ah, Stephen, that is the most pathetic thing in life, next to leaving the Fatherland. We dine with our student club for the last time at the Burg Keller, a dingy little tavern under a grim old house, but very dear to us. We swear for the last time to be clean and honorable and patriotic, and to die for the Fatherland, if God so wills. And then we march at the head of a slow procession out of the old West Gate, two and two, old members first, then the fox major and the foxes.”

“The foxes?” Stephen interrupted.

“The youngsters—the freshmen, you call them,” answered Richter, smiling.



“And after the foxes,” said Herr Tiefel, taking up the story, “after the foxes comes the empty carriage, with its gay postilion and four. It is like a long funeral. And every man is chanting that song. And so we go slowly until we; come to the Oil Mill Tavern, where we have had many a schlager-bout with the aristocrats. And the president of our society makes his farewell speech under the vines, and we drink to you with all the honors. And we drank to you, Carl, renowned swordsman!” And Herr Tiefel, carried away by the recollection, rose to his feet.



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The others caught fire, and stood up with their mugs high in the air, shouting:

“Lebe wohl, Carl! Lebe wohl! Salamander, salamander, salamander! Ein ist ein, zwei ist zwei, drei ist drei! Lebe wohl!”

And so they toasted every man present, even Stephen himself, whom they complimented on his speech. And he soon learned to cry Salamander, and to rub his mug on the table, German fashion. He was not long in discovering that Richter was not merely a prime favorite with his companions, but likewise a person of some political importance in South St. Louis. In the very midst of their merriment an elderly man whom Stephen recognized as one of the German leaders (he afterwards became a United States general) came and stood smiling by the table and joined in the singing. But presently he carried Richter away with him.

“What a patriot he would have made, had our country been spared to us!” exclaimed Herr Konig. “I think he was the best man with the Schlager that Jena ever saw. Even Korner likes not to stand against him in mask and fencing hat, all padded. Eh, Rudolph?”

Herr Korner gave a good-natured growl of assent.

“I have still a welt that he gave me a month since,” he said. “He has left his mark on many an aristocrat.”

“And why did you always fight the aristocrats?” Stephen asked.

They all tried to tell him at once, but Tiefel prevailed.

“Because they were for making our country Austrian, my friend,” he cried. “Because they were overbearing, and ground the poor. Because the most of them were immoral like the French, and we knew that it must be by morality and pure living that our ‘Vaterland’ was to be rescued. And so we formed our guilds in opposition to theirs. We swore to live by the standards of the great Jahn, of whom you spoke. We swore to strive for the freedom of Germany with manly courage. And when we were not duelling with the nobles, we had Schlager-bouts among ourselves.”

“Broadsword?” exclaimed Stephen, in amazement.

“Ja wohl,” answered Korner, puffing heavily. The slit in his nose was plain even in the moonlight. “To keep our hands in, as you would say. You Americans are a brave people—without the Schlager. But we fought that we might not become effete.”

It was then that Stephen ventured to ask a question that, had been long burning within him.



“See here, Mr. Korner,” said he, “how did Richter come by that scar? He always gets red when I mention it. He will never tell me.”

“Ah, I can well believe that,” answered Korner. “I will recount that matter,—if you do not tell Carl, lieber Freund. He would not forgive me. I was there in Berlin at the time. It was a famous time. Tiefel will bear me out.”

“Ja, ja!” said Tiefel, eagerly.



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“Mr. Brice,” Herr Korner continued, “has never heard of the Count von Kalbach. No, of course. We at Jena had, and all Germany. Many of us of the Burschenschaft will bear to the grave the marks of his Schlager. Von Kalbach went to Bonn, that university of the aristocrats, where he was worshipped. When he came to Berlin with his sister, crowds would gather to look at them. They were like Wodan and Freya. ‘Donner!’” exclaimed Herr Korner, “there is something in blood, when all is said. He was as straight and strong as an oak of the Black Forest, and she as fair as a poplar. It is so with the Pomeranians.

“It was in the year ’47, when Carl Richter was gone home to Berlin before his last semester, to see his father: One fine morning von Kalbach rode in at the Brandenburg gate on a great black stallion. He boasted openly that day that none of the despised ‘Burschenschaft’ dare stand before him. And Carl Richter took up the challenge. Before night all Berlin had heard of the temerity of the young Liberal of the Jena ‘Burschenschaft’. To our shame be it said, we who knew and loved Carl likewise feared for him.

“Carl chose for his second Ebhardt, a man of our own Germanian Club at Jena, since killed in the Breite Strasse. And if you will believe me, my friend. I tell you that Richter came to the glade at daybreak smoking his pipe. The place was filled, the nobles on one side and the Burschenschaft on the other, and the sun coming up over the trees. Richter would not listen to any of us, not even the surgeon. He would not have the silk wound on his arm, nor the padded breeches, nor the neck covering—Nothing! So Ebhardt put on his gauntlets and peaked cap, and his apron with the device of the Germanians.

“There stood the Count in his white shirt in the pose of a statue. And when it was seen that Richter likewise had no protection, but was calmly smoking the little short pipe, with a charred bowl, a hush fell upon all. At the sight of the pipe von Kalbach ground his heel in the turf, and when the word was given he rushed at Richter like a wild beast. You, my friend, who have never heard the whistle of sharp Schlager cannot know the song which a skilled arm draws from the blade. It was music that morning: You should have seen the noble’s mighty strokes—‘Prim und Second und Terz und Quart’. You would have marked how Richter met him at every blow. Von Kalbach never once took his eyes from the blue smoke from the bowl. He was terrible in his fury, and I shiver now to think how we of the Burschenschaft trembled when we saw that our champion was driven back a step, and then another. You must know that it is a lasting disgrace to be forced over one’s own line. It seemed as if we could not bear the agony. And then, while we counted out the last seconds of the half, came a snap like that of a whip’s lash, and the bowl of Richter’s pipe lay smouldering on the grass. The noble had cut the stem as clean as



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it were sapling twig, and there stood Richter with the piece still clenched in his teeth, his eyes ablaze, and his cheek running blood. He pushed the surgeon away when he came forward with his needles. The Count was smiling as he put up his sword, his friends crowding around him, when Ebhardt cried out that his man could fight the second mensur,—though the wound was three needles long. Then Kalbach cried aloud that he would kill him. But he had not seen Carl's eyes. Something was in them that made us think as we washed the cut. But when we spoke to him he said nothing. Nor could we force the pipe stems from his teeth.

“Donner Schock!” exclaimed Herr Korner, but reverently, “if I live to a hundred I never hope to see such a sight as that ‘Mensur’. The word was given. The Schlager flew so fast that we only saw the light and heard the ring alone. Before we of the Burschenschaft knew what had happened the Count von Kalbach was over his line and had flung his Schlager into a great tree, and was striding from the place with his head hung and the tears streamin down his face.”

Amid a silence, Herr Korner lifted his great mug and emptied it slowly. A wind was rising, bearing with it song and laughter from distant groups, —Teutonic song and, laughter. The moonlight trembled through the shifting leaves. And Stephen was filled with a sense of the marvelous. It was as if this fierce duel, so full of national significance to a German, had been fought in another existence, It was incredible to him that the unassuming lawyer he knew, so wholly Americanized, had been the hero of it. Strange, indeed, that the striving life of these leaders of European Revolution had been suddenly cut off in its vigor. There came to Stephen a flash of that world-comprehension which marks great statesmen. Was it not with a divine purpose that this measureless force of patriotism and high ideal had been given to this youngest of the nations, that its high mission might be fulfilled?

Miss Russell heard of Stephen's speeches. She and her brothers and Jack Brinsmade used to banter him when he came a-visiting in Bellefontaine Road. The time was not yet come when neighbor stared coldly upon neighbor, when friends of long standing passed each other with averted looks. It was not even a wild dream that white-trash Lincoln would be elected. And so Mr. Jack, who made speeches for Breckenridge in the face of Mr. Brinsmade's Union leanings, laughed at Stephen when he came to spend the night. He joined forces with Puss in making clever fun of the booby Dutch, which Stephen was wise enough to take good-naturedly. But once or twice when he met Clarence Colfax at these houses he was aware of a decided change in the attitude of that young gentleman. This troubled him more than he cared to admit. For he liked Clarence, who reminded him of Virginia—at once a pleasure and a pain.

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It is no harm to admit (for the benefit of the Society for Psychical Research) that Stephen still dreamed of her. He would go about his work absently all the morning with the dream still in his head, and the girl so vividly near him that he could not believe her to be travelling in England, as Miss Russell said. Puss and Anne were careful to keep him informed as to her whereabouts. Stephen set this down as a most natural supposition on their part that all young men must have an interest in Virginia Carvel.

How needless to add that Virginia in her correspondence never mentioned Stephen, although Puss in her letters took pains to record the fact every time that he addressed a Black Republican meeting: Miss Carvel paid no attention to this part of the communications. Her concern for Judge Whipple Virginia did not hide. Anne wrote of him. How he stood the rigors of that campaign were a mystery to friend and foe alike.

CHAPTER XI

HOW A PRINCE CAME

Who has not heard of the St. Louis Agricultural Fair. And what memories of its October days the mere mention of at brings back to us who knew that hallowed place as children. There was the vast wooden amphitheatre where mad trotting races were run; where stolid cattle walked past the Chinese pagoda in the middle circle, and shook the blue ribbons on their horns. But it was underneath the tiers of seats (the whole way around the ring) that the chief attractions lay hid. These were the church booths, where fried oysters and sandwiches and cake and whit candy and ice-cream were sold by your mothers and sister for charity. These ladies wore white aprons as they waited on the burly farmers. And toward the close of the day for which they had volunteered they became distracted. Christ Church had a booth, and St. George's; and Dr. Thayer's, Unitarian, where Mrs. Brice might be found and Mr. Davitt's, conducted by Mr. Eliphalet Hopper on strictly business principles, and the Roman Catholic Cathedral, where Miss Renault and other young ladies of French descent presided: and Dr. Posthelwaite's, Presbyterian, which we shall come to presently. And others, the whole way around the ring.

There is one Fair which old St. Louisans still delight to recall,—that of the autumn of 1860—Think for a minute. You will remember that Virginia Carvel came back from Europe; and made quite a stir in a town where all who were worth knowing were intimates. Stephen caught a glimpse of her an the street, received a distant bow, and dreamed of her that night. Mr. Eliphalet Hopper, in his Sunday suit, was at the ferry to pay his respects to the Colonel, to offer his services, and to tell him how the business fared. His was the first St. Louis face that Virginia saw (Captain Lige being in New Orleans), and if she conversed with Eliphalet on the ferry with more warmth than ever before, there is nothing strange in that. Mr. Hopper rode home with them in the

carriage, and walked to Miss Crane's with his heart thumping against his breast, and wild thoughts whirling in his head.

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The next morning, in Virginia's sunny front room tears and laughter mingled. There was a present for Eugenie and Anne and Emily and Puss and Maude, and a hear kiss from the Colonel for each. And more tears and laughter and sighs as Mammy Easter and Rosetta unpacked the English trunks, and with trembling hands and rolling eyes laid each Parisian gown upon the bed.

But the Fair, the Fair!

At the thought of that glorious year my pen fails me. Why mention the dread possibility of the negro-worshiper Lincoln being elected the very next month? Why listen, to the rumblings in the South? Pompeii had chariot-races to the mutterings of Vesuvius. St. Louis was in gala garb to greet a Prince.

That was the year that Miss Virginia Carvel was given charge of the booth in Dr. Posthelwaite's church,—the booth next one of the great arches through which prancing horses and lowing cattle came.

Now who do you think stopped at the booth for a chat with Miss Jinny? Who made her blush as pink as her Paris gown? Who slipped into her hand the contribution for the church, and refused to take the cream candy she laughingly offered him as an equivalent?

None other than Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, Duke of Saxony, Duke of Cornwall and Rothesay, Earl of Chester and Carrick, Baron Renfrew, and Lord of the Isles. Out of compliment to the Republic which he visited, he bore the simple title of Lord Renfrew.

Bitter tears of envy, so it was said, were shed in the other booths. Belle Cluyne made a remark which is best suppressed. Eliphalet Hopper, in Mr. Davitt's booths, stared until his eyes watered. A great throng peered into the covered way, kept clear for his Royal Highness and suite, and for the prominent gentlemen who accompanied them. And when the Prince was seen to turn to His Grace, the Duke of Newcastle, and the subscription was forthcoming, a great cheer shook the building, while Virginia and the young ladies with her bowed and blushed and smiled. Colonel Carvel, who was a Director, laid his hand paternally on the blue coat of the young Prince. Reversing all precedent, he presented his Royal Highness to his daughter and to the other young ladies. It was done with the easy grace of a Southern gentleman. Whereupon Lord Renfrew bowed and smiled too, and stroked his mustache, which was a habit he had, and so fell naturally into the ways of Democracy.

Miss Puss Russell, who has another name, and whose hair is now white, will tell you how Virginia carried off the occasion with credit to her country.

It is safe to say that the Prince forgot "Silver Heels" and "Royal Oak," although they had been trotted past the Pagoda only that morning for his delectation. He had forgotten his



Honor the Mayor, who had held fast to the young man's arm as the four coal-black horses had pranced through the crowds all the way from Barnum's Hotel to the Fair Grounds. His Royal Highness forgot himself still further, and had at length withdrawn his hands from the pockets of his ample pantaloons and thrust his thumbs into his yellow waistcoat. And who shall blame him if Miss Virginia's replies to his sallies enchained him?

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Not the least impressive of those who stood by, smiling, was the figure of the tall Colonel, his hat off for once, and pride written on his face. Oh, that his dear wife might have lived to see this!

What was said in that historic interview with a future Sovereign of England, far from his royal palaces, on Democratic sawdust, with an American Beauty across a board counter, was immediately recorded by the Colonel, together with an exact description of his Royal Highness's blue coat, and light, flowing pantaloons, and yellow waist-coat, and colored kids; even the Prince's habit of stroking his mustache did not escape the watchful eye. It is said that his Grace of Newcastle smiled twice at Miss Virginia's retorts, and Lord Lyons, the British Minister, has more than two to his credit. But suddenly a strange thing happened. Miss Virginia in the very midst of a sentence paused, and then stopped. Her eyes had strayed from the Royal Countenance, and were fixed upon a point in the row of heads outside the promenade. Her sentence was completed—with some confusion. Perhaps it is no wonder that my Lord Renfrew, whose intuitions are quick, remarked that he had already remained too long, thus depriving the booth of the custom it otherwise should have had. This was a graceful speech, and a kingly. Followed by his retinue and the prominent citizens, he moved on. And it was remarked by keen observers that his Honor the Mayor had taken hold once more of the Prince's elbow, who divided his talk with Colonel Carver.

Dear Colonel Carvel! What a true American of the old type you were. You, nor the Mayor, nor the rest of the grave and elderly gentlemen were not blinded by the light of a royal Presence. You saw in him only an amiable and lovable young man, who was to succeed the most virtuous and lovable of sovereigns, Victoria. You, Colonel Carvel, were not one to cringe to royalty. Out of respect for the just and lenient Sovereign, his mother, you did honor to the Prince. But you did not remind him, as you might have, that your ancestors fought for the King at Marston Moor, and that your grandfather was once an intimate of Charles James Fox. But what shall we say of Mr. Cluyme, and of a few others whose wealth alone enabled them to be Directors of the Fair? Miss Isabel Cluyme was duly presented, in proper form, to his Royal Highness. Her father owned a "peerage," and had been abroad likewise. He made no such bull as the Colonel. And while the celebrated conversation of which we have spoken was in progress, Mr. Cluyme stood back and blushed for his countryman, and smiled apologetically at the few gentlemen of the royal suite who glanced his way.

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His Royal Highness then proceeded to luncheon, which is described by a most amiable Canadian correspondent who sent to his newspaper an account of it that I cannot forbear to copy. You may believe what he says, or not, just as you choose: "So interested was his Royal Highness in the proceedings that he stayed in the ring three and a half hours witnessing these trotting matches. He was invited to take lunch in a little wooden shanty prepared for the Directors, to which he accordingly repaired, but whether he got anything to eat or not, I cannot tell. After much trouble he forced his way to the table, which he found surrounded by a lot of ravenous animals. And upon some half dozen huge dishes were piled slices of beef, mutton, and buffalo tongue; beside them were great jugs of lager beer, rolls of bread, and plates of a sort of cabbage cut into thin shreds, raw, and mixed with vinegar. There were neither salt spoons nor mustard spoons, the knives the gentlemen were eating with serving in their stead; and, by the aid of nature's forks, the slices of beef and mutton were transferred to the plates of those who desired to eat. While your correspondent stood looking at the spectacle, the Duke of Newcastle came in, and he sat looking too. He was evidently trying to look democratic, but could not manage it. By his side stood a man urging him to try the lager beer, and cabbage also, I suppose. Henceforth, let the New York Aldermen who gave to the Turkish Ambassador ham sandwiches and bad sherry rest in peace."

Even that great man whose memory we love and revere, Charles Dickens, was not overkind to us, and saw our faults rather than our virtues. We were a nation of grasshoppers, and spat tobacco from early morning until late at night. This some of us undoubtedly did, to our shame be it said. And when Mr. Dickens went down the Ohio, early in the '40's, he complained of the men and women he met; who, bent with care, bolted through silent meals, and retired within their cabins. Mr. Dickens saw our ancestors bowed in a task that had been too great for other blood,—the task of bringing into civilization in the compass of a century a wilderness three thousand miles in breadth. And when his Royal Highness came to St. Louis and beheld one hundred thousand people at the Fair, we are sure that he knew how recently the ground he stood upon had been conquered from the forest.

A strange thing had happened, indeed. For, while the Prince lingered in front of the booth of Dr. Posthelwaite's church and chatted with Virginia, a crowd had gathered without. They stood peering over the barricade into the covered way, proud of the self-possession of their young countrywoman. And here, by a twist of fate, Mr. Stephen Brice found himself perched on a barrel beside his friend Richter. It was Richter who discovered her first.

"Himmel! It is Miss Carvel herself, Stephen," he cried, impatient at the impassive face of his companion. "Look, Stephen, look there."

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“Yes,” said Stephen, “I see.”

“Ach!” exclaimed the disgusted German, “will nothing move you? I have seen German princesses that are peasant women beside her. How she carries it off! See, the Prince is laughing!”

Stephen saw, and horror held him in a tremor. His one thought was of escape. What if she should raise her eyes, and amid those vulgar stares discern his own? And yet that was within him which told him that she would look up. It was only a question of moments, and then,—and then she would in truth despise him! Wedged tightly between the people, to move was to be betrayed. He groaned.

Suddenly he rallied, ashamed of his own false shame. This was because of one whom he had known for the short, space of a day—whom he was to remember for a lifetime. The man he worshipped, and she detested. Abraham Lincoln would not have blushed between honest clerks and farmers Why should Stephen Brice? And what, after all, was this girl to him? He could not tell. Almost the first day he had come to St. Louis the wires of their lives had crossed, and since then had crossed many times again, always with a spark. By the might of generations she was one thing, and he another. They were separated by a vast and ever-widening breach only to be closed by the blood and bodies of a million of their countrymen. And yet he dreamed of her.

Gradually, charmed like the simple people about him, Stephen became lost in the fascination of the scene. Suddenly confronted at a booth in a public fair with the heir to the English throne, who but one of her own kind might have carried it off so well, have been so complete a mistress of herself? Since, save for a heightened color, Virginia gave no sign of excitement. Undismayed, forgetful of the admiring crowd, unconscious of their stares until—until the very strength of his gaze had compelled her own. Such had been the prophecy within him. Nor did he wonder because, in that multitude of faces, her eyes had flown so straightly homeward to his.

With a rough effort that made an angry stir, Stephen flung the people aside and escaped, the astonished Richter following in his wake. Nor could the honest German dissuade him from going back to the office for the rest of the day, or discover what had happened.

But all through the afternoon that scene was painted on the pages of Stephen's books. The crude booth in the darkened way. The free pose of the girl standing in front of her companions, a blue wisp of autumn sunlight falling at her feet. The young Prince laughing at her sallies, and the elderly gentleman smiling with benevolence upon the pair.



CHAPTER XII

INTO WHICH A POTENTATE COMES

Virginia danced with the Prince, "by Special Appointment," at the ball that evening. So did her aunt, Mrs. Addison Colfax. So likewise was Miss Belle Cluyme among those honored and approved. But Virginia wore the most beautiful of her Paris gowns, and seemed a princess to one watching from the gallery. Stephen was sure that his Royal Highness made that particular dance longer than the others. It was decidedly longer than the one he had with Miss Cluyme, although that young lady had declared she was in heaven.

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Alas, that princes cannot abide with us forever! His Royal Highness bade farewell to St. Louis, and presently that same 'City of Alton' which bore him northward came back again in like royal state, and this time it was in honor of a Democrat potentate. He is an old friend now, Senator and Judge and Presidential Candidate,—Stephen Arnold Douglas,—father of the doctrine of Local Sovereignty, which he has come to preach. So goes the world. We are no sooner rid of one hero than we are ready for another.

Blow, you bandsmen on the hurricane deck, let the shores echo with your national airs! Let the gay bunting wave in the river breeze! Uniforms flash upon the guards, for no campaign is complete without the military. Here are brave companies of the Douglas Guards, the Hickory Sprouts, and the Little Giants to do honor to the person of their hero. Cannon are booming as he steps into his open carriage that evening on the levee, where the piles of river freight are covered with people. Transparencies are dodging in the darkness. A fresh band strikes up "Hail Columbia," and the four horses prance away, followed closely by the "Independent Broom Rangers." "The shouts for Douglas," remarked a keen observer who was present, "must have penetrated Abraham's bosom at Springfield."

Mr. Jacob Cluyme, who had been a Bell and Everett man until that day, was not the only person of prominence converted. After the speech he assured the Judge that he was now undergoing the greatest pleasure of his life in meeting the popular orator, the true representative man of the Great West, the matured statesman, and the able advocate of national principles. And although Mr. Douglas looked as if he had heard something of the kind before, he pressed Mr. Cluyme's hand warmly.

So was the author of Popular Sovereignty, "the great Bulwark of American Independence," escorted to the Court House steps, past houses of his staunch supporters; which were illuminated in his honor. Stephen, wedged among the people, remarked that the Judge had lost none of his self-confidence since that day at Freeport. Who, seeing the Democratic candidate smiling and bowing to the audience that blocked the wide square, would guess that the Question troubled him at all, or that he missed the votes of the solid South? How gravely the Judge listened to the eulogy of the prominent citizen, who reminded him that his work was not yet finished, and that he still was harnessed to the cause of the people! And how happy was the choice of that word harnessed!

The Judge had heard (so he said) with deep emotion the remarks of the chairman. Then followed one of those masterful speeches which wove a spell about those who listened,—which, like the most popular of novels, moved to laughter and to tears, to anger and to pity. Mr. Brice and Mr Richter were not the only Black Republicans who were depressed that night. And they trudged homeward with the wild enthusiasm still ringing in their ears, heavy with the thought that the long, hot campaign of their own Wide-Awakes might be in vain.



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They had a grim reproof from Judge Whipple in the morning.

“So you too, gentlemen, took opium last night,” was all he said.

The dreaded possibility of Mr. Lincoln’s election did not interfere with the gayeties. The week after the Fair Mr. Clarence Colfax gave a great dance at Bellegarde, in honor of his cousin, Virginia, to which Mr. Stephen Brice was not invited. A majority of Company A was there. Virginia would have liked to have had them in uniform.

It was at this time that Anne Brinsmade took the notion of having a ball in costume. Virginia, on hearing the news, rode over from Bellegarde, and flinging her reins to Nicodemus ran up to Anne’s little dressing-room.

“Whom have you invited, Anne?” she demanded.

Anne ran over the long list of their acquaintance, but there was one name she omitted.

“Are you sure that that is all?” asked Virginia, searchingly, when she had finished.

Anne looked mystified.

“I have invited Stephen Brice, Jinny,” she said. But!—”

“But!” cried Virginia. “I knew it. Am I to be confronted with that Yankee everywhere I go? It is always ‘Stephen Brice’, and he is ushered in with a but.”

Anne was quite overcome by this outburst. She had dignity, however, and plenty of it. And she was a loyal friend.

“You have no right to criticise my guests, Virginia.”

Virginia, seated on the arm of a chair, tapped her foot on the floor.

“Why couldn’t things remain as they were?” she said. “We were so happy before these Yankees came. And they are not content in trying to deprive us of our rights. They must spoil our pleasure, too.”

“Stephen Brice is a gentleman,” answered Anne. “He spoils no one’s pleasure, and goes no place that he is not asked.”

“He has not behaved according to my idea of a gentleman, the few times that I have been unfortunate enough to encounter him,” Virginia retorted.



“You are the only one who says so, then.” Here the feminine got the better of Anne’s prudence, and she added. “I saw you waltz with him once, Jinny Carvel, and I am sure you never enjoyed a dance as much in your life.”

Virginia blushed purple.

“Anne Brinsmade!” she cried. “You may have your ball, and your Yankees, all of them you want. But I shan’t come. How I wish I had never seen that horrid Stephen Brice! Then you would never have insulted me.”

Virginia rose and snatched her riding-whip. This was too much for Anne. She threw her arms around her friend without more ado.

“Don’t quarrel with me, Jinny,” she said tearfully. “I couldn’t bear it. He—Mr. Brice is not coming, I am sure.”

Virginia disengaged herself.

“He is not coming?”

“No,” said Anne. “You asked me if he was invited. And I was going on to tell you that he could not come.”

She stopped, and stared at Virginia in bewilderment. That young lady, instead of beaming, had turned her back. She stood flicking her whip at the window, gazing out over the trees, down the slope to the river. Miss Russell might have interpreted these things. Simple Anne!



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"Why isn't he coming?" said Virginia, at last.

"Because he is to be one of the speakers at a big meeting that night. Have you seen him since you got home, Jinny? He is thinner than he was. We are much worried about him, because he has worked so hard this summer."

"A Black Republican meeting!" exclaimed Virginia, scornfully ignoring the rest of what was said. "Then I'll come, Anne dear," she cried, tripping the length of the room. "I'll come as Titania. Who will you be?"

She cantered off down the drive and out of the gate, leaving a very puzzled young woman watching her from the window. But when Virginia reached the forest at the bend of the road, she pulled her horse down to a walk.

She bethought herself of the gown which her Uncle Daniel had sent her from Calvert House, and of the pearls. And she determined to go as her great-grandmother, Dorothy Carvel.

Shades of romance! How many readers will smile before the rest of this true incident is told?

What had happened was this. Miss Anne Brinsmade had driven to town in her mother's Jenny Lind a day or two before, and had stopped (as she often did) to pay a call on Mrs. Brice. This lady, as may be guessed, was not given to discussion of her husband's ancestors, nor of her own. But on the walls of the little dining-room hung a Copley and two Stuarts. One of the Stuarts was a full length of an officer in the buff and blue of the Continental Army. And it was this picture which caught Anne's eye that day.

"How like Stephen!" she exclaimed. And added. "Only the face is much older. Who is it, Mrs. Brice?"

"Colonel Wilton Brice, Stephen's grandfather. There is a marked look about all the Brices. He was only twenty years of age when the Revolution began. That picture was painted much later in life, after Stuart came back to America, when the Colonel was nearly forty. He had kept his uniform, and his wife persuaded him to be painted in it."

"If Stephen would only come as Colonel Wilton Brice!" she cried. "Do you think he would, Mrs. Brice?"

Mrs. Brice laughed, and shook her head.

"I am afraid not, Anne," she said. "I have a part of the uniform upstairs, but I could never induce him even to try it on."



As she drove from shop to shop that day, Anne reflected that it certainly would not be like Stephen to wear his grandfather's uniform to a ball. But she meant to ask him, at any rate. And she had driven home immediately to write her invitations. It was with keen disappointment that she read his note of regret.

However, on the very day of the ball, Anne chanced to be in town again, and caught sight of Stephen pushing his way among the people on Fourth Street. She waved her hand to him, and called to Nicodemus to pull up at the sidewalk.

"We are all so sorry that you are not coming," said she, impulsively. And there she stopped short. For Anne was a sincere person, and remembered Virginia. "That is, I am so sorry," she added, a little hastily. "Stephen, I saw the portrait of your grandfather, and I wanted you to come in his costume."



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Stephen, smiling down on her, said nothing. And poor Anne, in her fear that he had perceived the shade in her meaning, made another unfortunate remark.

"If you were not a—a Republican—" she said.

"A Black Republican," he answered, and laughed at her discomfiture. "What then?"

Anne was very red.

"I only meant that if you were not a Republican, there would be no meeting to address that night."

"It does not make any difference to you what my politics are, does it?" he asked, a little earnestly.

"Oh, Stephen!" she exclaimed, in gentle reproof.

"Some people have discarded me," he said, striving to smile.

She wondered whether he meant Virginia, and whether he cared. Still further embarrassed, she said something which she regretted immediately.

"Couldn't you contrive to come?"

He considered.

"I will come, after the meeting, if it is not too late," he said at length. "But you must not tell any one."

He lifted his hat, and hurried on, leaving Anne in a quandary. She wanted him. But what was she to say to Virginia? Virginia was coming on the condition that he was not to be there. And Anne was scrupulous.

Stephen, too, was almost instantly sorry that he had promised. The little costumer's shop (the only one in the city at that time) had been ransacked for the occasion, and nothing was left to fit him. But when he reached home there was a strong smell of camphor in his mother's room. Colonel Brice's cocked hat and sword and spurs lay on the bed, and presently Hester brought in the blue coat and buff waistcoat from the kitchen, where she had been pressing them. Stephen must needs yield to his mother's persuasions and try them on—they were more than a passable fit. But there were the breeches and cavalry boots to be thought of, and the ruffled shirt and the powdered wig. So before tea he hurried down to the costumer's again, not quite sure that he was not making a fool of himself, and yet at last sufficiently entered into the spirit of the thing. The coat was mended and freshened. And when after tea he dressed in the character, his appearance was so striking that his mother could not refrain from some



little admiration. As for Hester, she was in transports. Stephen was human, and young. But still the frivolity of it all troubled him. He had inherited from Colonel Wilton Brice, the Puritan, other things beside clothes. And he felt in his heart as he walked soberly to the hall that this was no time for fancy dress balls. All intention of going was banished by the time his turn had come to speak.



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But mark how certain matters are beyond us. Not caring to sit out the meeting on the platform, he made his way down the side of the crowded hall, and ran into (of all people) big Tom Catherwood. As the Southern Rights politics of the Catherwood family were a matter of note in the city, Stephen did not attempt to conceal his astonishment. Tom himself was visibly embarrassed. He congratulated Stephen on his speech, and volunteered the news that he had come in a spirit of fairness to hear what the intelligent leaders of the Republican party, such as Judge Whipple, had to say. After that he fidgeted. But the sight of him started in Stephen a train of thought that closed his ears for once to the Judge's words. He had had before a huge liking for Tom. Now he admired him, for it was no light courage that took one of his position there. And Stephen remembered that Tom was not risking merely the displeasure of his family and his friends, but likewise something of greater value than, either. From childhood Tom had been the devoted slave of Virginia Carvel, with as little chance of marrying her as a man ever had. And now he was endangering even that little alliance.

And so Stephen began to think of Virginia, and to wonder what she would wear at Anne's party; and to speculate how she would have treated him if had gone. To speak truth, this last matter had no little weight in his decision to stay away. But we had best leave motives to those whose business and equipment it is to weigh to a grain. Since that agonizing moment when her eyes had met his own among the curiously vulgar at the Fair, Stephen's fear of meeting Virginia had grown to the proportions of a terror. And yet there she was in his mind, to take possession of it on the slightest occasion.

When Judge Whipple had finished, Tom rose. He awoke Mr. Brice from a trance.

"Stephen," said he, "of course you're going to the Brinsmade's."

Stephen shook his head.

"Why not?" said Tom, in surprise. "Haven't you a costume?"

"Yes," he answered dubiously.

"Why, then, you've got to come with me," says Tom, heartily. "It isn't too late, and they'll want you. I've a buggy, and I'm going to the Russells' to change my clothes. Come along"

Steven went.

CHAPTER XIII

AT MR. BRINSMADÉ'S GATE



The eastern side of the Brinsmade house is almost wholly taken up by the big drawing-room where Anne gave her fancy-dress ball. From the windows might be seen, through the trees in the grounds, the Father of Waters below. But the room is gloomy now, that once was gay, and a heavy coat of soot is spread on the porch at the back, where the apple blossoms still fall thinly in the spring. The huge black town has coiled about the place the garden still struggles on, but the giants of the forest are dying and dead. Bellefontaine Road itself, once the drive of fashion, is no more. Trucks and cars crowd the streets which follow its once rural windings, and gone forever are those comely wooded hills and green pastures,—save in the memory of those who have been spared to dream.

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Still the old house stands, begrimed but stately, rebuking the sordid life around it. Still come into it the Brinsmades to marriage and to death. Five and sixty years are gone since Mr. Calvin Brinsmade took his bride there. They sat on the porch in the morning light, harking to the whistle of the quail in the corn, and watching the frightened deer scamper across the open. Do you see the bride in her high-waisted gown, and Mr. Calvin in his stock and his blue tail-coat and brass buttons?

Old people will tell you of the royal hospitality then, of the famous men and women who promenaded under those chandeliers, and sat down to the game-laden table. In 1835 General Atkinson and his officers thought nothing of the twenty miles from Jefferson Barracks below, nor of dancing all night with the Louisville belles, who were Mrs. Brinsmade's guests. Thither came Miss Todd of Kentucky, long before she thought of taking for a husband that rude man of the people, Abraham Lincoln. Foreigners of distinction fell in love with the place, with its open-hearted master and mistress, and wrote of it in their journals. Would that many of our countrymen, who think of the West as rough, might have known the quality of the Brinsmades and their neighbors!

An era of charity, of golden simplicity, was passing on that October night of Anne Brinsmade's ball. Those who made merry there were soon to be driven and scattered before the winds of war; to die at Wilson's Creek, or Shiloh, or to be spared for heroes of the Wilderness. Some were to eke out a life of widowhood in poverty. All were to live soberly, chastened by what they had seen. A fear knocked at Colonel Carvel's heart as he stood watching the bright figures.

"Brinsmade," he said, "do you remember this room in May, '46?"

Mr. Brinsmade, startled, turned upon him quickly.

"Why, Colonel, you have read my very thoughts," he said. "Some of those who were here then are—are still in Mexico."

"And some who came home, Brinsmade, blamed God because they had not fallen," said the Colonel.

"Hush, Comyn, His will be done," he answered; "He has left a daughter to comfort you."

Unconsciously their eyes sought Virginia. In her gown of faded primrose and blue with its quaint stays and short sleeves, she seemed to have caught the very air of the decorous century to which it belonged. She was standing against one of the pilasters at the side of the room, laughing demurely at the antics of Becky Sharp and Sir John Falstaff,—Miss Puss Russell and Mr. Jack Brinsmade, respectively.

Mr. Tennyson's "Idylls" having appeared but the year before, Anne was dressed as Elaine, a part which suited her very well. It was strange indeed to see her waltzing with



Daniel Boone (Mr. Clarence Colfax) in his Indian buckskins. Eugenie went as Marie Antoinette. Tall Maude Catherwood was most imposing as Rebecca; and her brother George made a towering Friar Tuck, Even little fifteen-year-old Spencer Catherwood, the contradiction of the family, was there. He went as the lieutenant Napoleon, walking about with his hands behind his back and his brows thoughtfully contracted.



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The Indian summer night was mild. It was at the very height of the festivities that Dorothy Carvel and Mr. Daniel Boone were making their way together to the porch when the giant gate-keeper of Kenilworth Castle came stalking up the steps out of the darkness, brandishing his club in their faces. Dorothy screamed, and even the doughty Daniel gave back a step.

"Tom Catherwood! How dare you? You frightened me nearly to death."

"I'm sorry, Jinny, indeed I am," said the giant, repentant, and holding her hand in his.

"Where have you been?" demanded Virginia, a little mollified. "What makes you so late?"

"I've been to a Lincoln meeting," said honest Tom; "where I heard a very fine speech from a friend of yours."

Virginia tossed her head.

"You might have been better employed," said she, and added, with dignity, "I have no friends who speak at Black Republican meetings."

"How about Judge Whipple?" said Tom.

She stopped. "Did you mean the Judge?" she asked, over her shoulder.

"No," said Tom, "I meant—"

He got no further. Virginia slipped her arm through Clarence's, and they went off together to the end of the veranda. Poor Tom! He passed on into the gay drawing-room, but the zest had been taken out of his antics for that night.

"Whom did he mean, Jinny?" said Clarence, when they were on the seat under the vines.

"He meant that Yankee, Stephen Brice," answered Virginia, languidly. "I am so tired of hearing about him."

"So am I," said Clarence, with a fervor by no means false. "By George, I think he will make a Black Republican out of Tom, if he keeps on. Puss and Jack have been talking about him all summer, until I am out of patience. I reckon he has brains. But suppose he has addressed fifty Lincoln meetings, as they say, is that any reason for making much of him? I should not have him at Bellegarde. I am surprised that Mr. Russell allows him in his house. I can see why Anne likes him."

"Why?"



“He is on the Brinsmade charity list.”

“He is not on their charity list, nor on any other,” said Virginia, quickly. “Stephen Brice is the last person who would submit to charity.”

“And you are the last person who I supposed would stand up for him,” cried her cousin, surprised and nettled.

There was an instant’s silence.

“I want to be fair, Max,” she said quietly. “Pa offered them our Glencoe House last summer at a low price, and they insisted on paying what Mr. Edwards gave five years ago,—or nothing. You know that I detest a Yankee as much as you do,” she continued, indignation growing in her voice. “I did not come out here with you to be insulted.”

With her hand on the rail, she made as if to rise. Clarence was perforce mollified.

“Don’t go, Jinny,” he said beseechingly. “I didn’t mean to make you angry—”



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"I can't see why you should always be dragging in this Mr. Brice," she said, almost tearfully. (It will not do to pause now and inquire into Virginia's logic.) "I came out to hear what you had to tell me."

"Jinny, I have been made second lieutenant of Company A."

"Oh, Max, I am so glad! I am so proud of you!"

"I suppose that you have heard the result of the October elections, Jinny."

"Pa said something about them to-night," she answered; why?"

"It looks now as if there were a chance of the Republicans winning," he answered. But it was elation that caught his voice, not gloom.

"You mean that this white trash Lincoln may be President?" she exclaimed, seizing his arm.

"Never!" he cried. "The South will not submit to that until every man who can bear arms is shot down." He paused. The strains of a waltz mingled with talk and laughter floated out of the open window. His voice dropped to a low intensity. "We are getting ready in Company A," he said; "the traitors will be dropped. We are getting ready to fight for Missouri and for the South."

The girl felt his excitement, his exaltation.

"And if you were not, Max, I should disown you," she whispered.

He leaned forward until his face was close to hers.

"And now?" he said.

"I am ready to work, to starve, to go to prison, to help—"

He sank back heavily into the corner.

"Is that all, Jinny?"

"All?" she repeated. "Oh, if a woman could only do more!"

"And is there nothing—for me?"

Virginia straightened.

"Are you doing this for a reward?" she demanded.



“No,” he answered passionately. “You know that I am not. Do you remember when you told me that I was good for nothing, that I lacked purpose?”

“Yes, Max.”

“I have thought it over since,” he went on rapidly; “you were right. I cannot work—it is not in me. But I have always felt that I could make a name for myself—for you—in the army. I am sure that I could command a regiment. And now the time is coming.”

She did not answer him, but absently twisted the fringe of his buckskins in her fingers.

“Ever since I have known what love is I have loved you, Jinny. It was so when we climbed the cherry trees at Bellegarde. And you loved me then—I know you did. You loved me when I went East to school at the Military Institute. But it has not been the same of late,” he faltered. “Something has happened. I felt it first on that day you rode out to Bellegarde when you said that my life was of no use. Jinny, I don’t ask much. I am content to prove myself. War is coming, and we shall have to free ourselves from Yankee insolence. It is what we have both wished for. When I am a general, will you marry me?”

For a wavering instant she might have thrown herself into his outstretched arms. Why not, and have done with sickening doubts? Perhaps her hesitation hung on the very boyishness of his proposal. Perhaps the revelation that she did not then fathom was that he had not developed since those childish days. But even while she held back, came the beat of hoofs on the gravel below them, and one of the Bellegarde servants rode into the light pouring through the open door. He called for his master.



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Clarence muttered his dismay as he followed his cousin to the steps.

“What is it?” asked Virginia, alarmed.

“Nothing; I forgot to sign the deed to the Elleardsville property, and Worington wants it to-night.” Cutting short Sambo’s explanations, Clarence vaulted on the horse. Virginia was at his stirrup. Leaning over in the saddle, he whispered: “I’ll be back in a quarter of an hour Will you wait?”

“Yes,” she said, so that he barely heard.

“Here?”

She nodded.

He was away at a gallop, leaving Virginia standing bareheaded to the night, alone. A spring of pity, of affection for Clarence suddenly welled up within her. There came again something of her old admiration for a boy, impetuous and lovable, who had tormented and defended her with the same hand.

Patriotism, stronger in Virginia than many of us now can conceive, was on Clarence’s side. Ambition was strong in her likewise. Now was she all afire with the thought that she, a woman, might by a single word give the South a leader. That word would steady him, for there was no question of her influence. She trembled at the reckless lengths he might go in his dejection, and a memory returned to her of a day at Glencoe, before he had gone off to school, when she had refused to drive with him. Colonel Carvel had been away from home. She had pretended not to care. In spite of Ned’s beseechings Clarence had ridden off on a wild thoroughbred colt and had left her to an afternoon of agony. Vividly she recalled his home-coming in the twilight, his coat torn and muddy, a bleeding cut on his forehead, and the colt quivering tame.

In those days she had thought of herself unreservedly as meant for him. Dash and courage and generosity had been the beacon lights on her horizon. But now? Were there not other qualities? Yes, and Clarence should have these, too. She would put them into him. She also had been at fault, and perhaps it was because of her wavering loyalty to him that he had not gained them.

Her name spoken within the hall startled Virginia from her reverie, and she began to walk rapidly down the winding drive. A fragment of the air to which they were dancing brought her to a stop. It was the Jenny Lind waltz. And with it came clear and persistent the image she had sought to shut out and failed. As if to escape it now, she fairly ran all the way to the light at the entrance and hid in the magnolias clustered beside the gateway. It was her cousin’s name she whispered over and over to herself as she waited, vibrant with a strange excitement. It was as though the very elements

might thwart her wail. Clarence would be delayed, or they would miss her at the house, and search. It seemed an eternity before she heard the muffled thud of a horse cantering in the clay road.



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Virginia stood out in the light fairly between the gate posts. Too late she saw the horse rear as the rider flew back in his seat, for she had seized the bridle. The beams from the lamp fell upon a Revolutionary horseman, with cocked hat and sword and high riding-boots. For her his profile was in silhouette, and the bold nose and chin belonged to but one man she knew. He was Stephen Brice. She gave a cry of astonishment and dropped the rein in dismay. Hot shame was surging in her face. Her impulse was to fly, nor could she tell what force that stayed her feet.

As for Stephen, he stood high in his stirrups and stared down at the girl. She was standing full in the light,—her lashes fallen, her face crimson. But no sound of surprise escaped him because it was she, nor did he wonder at her gown of a gone-by century. Her words came first, and they were low. She did not address him by name.

“I—I thought that you were my cousin,” she said. “What must you think of me!”

Stephen was calm.

“I expected it,” he answered.

She gave a step backward, and raised her frightened eyes to his.

“You expected it?” she faltered.

“I can’t say why,” he said quickly, “but it seems to me as if this had happened before. I know that I am talking nonsense—”

Virginia was trembling now. And her answer was not of her own choosing.

“It has happened before,” she cried. “But where? And when?”

“It may have been in a dream,” he answered her, “that I saw you as you stand there by my bridle. I even know the gown you wear.”

She put her hand to her forehead. Had it been a dream? And what mystery was it that sent him here this night of all nights? She could not even have said that it was her own voice making reply.

“And I—I have seen you, with the sword, and the powdered hair, and the blue coat and the buff waistcoat. It is a buff waistcoat like that my great-grandfather wears in his pictures.”

“It is a buff waistcoat,” he said, all sense of strangeness gone.

The roses she held dropped on the gravel, and she put out her hand against his horse’s flank. In an instant he had leaped from his saddle, and his arm was holding her. She



did not resist, marvelling rather at his own steadiness, nor did she then resent a tenderness in his voice.

“I hope you will forgive me—Virginia,” he said. “I should not have mentioned this. And yet I could not help it.”

She looked up at him rather wildly.

“It was I who stopped you,” she said; “I was waiting for—”

“For whom?”

The interruption brought remembrance.

“For my cousin, Mr. Colfax,” she answered, in another tone. And as she spoke she drew away from him, up the driveway. But she had scarcely taken five steps when she turned again, her face burning defiance. “They told me you were not coming,” she said almost fiercely. “Why did you come?”



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It was a mad joy that Stephen felt.

“You did not wish me to come?” he demanded.

“Oh, why do you ask that?” she cried. “You know I would not have been here had I thought you were coming. Anne promised me that you would not come.”

What would she not have given for those words back again

Stephen took astride toward her, and to the girl that stride betokened a thousand things that went to the man’s character. Within its compass the comparison in her mind was all complete. He was master of himself when he spoke.

“You dislike me, Miss Carvel,” he said steadily. “I do not blame you. Nor do I flatter myself that it is only because you believe one thing, and I another. But I assure you that it is my misfortune rather than my fault that I have not pleased you,—that I have met you only to anger you.”

He paused, for she did not seem to hear him. She was gazing at the distant lights moving on the river. Had he come one step farther?—but he did not. Presently she knew that he was speaking again, in the same measured tone.

“Had Miss Brinsmade told me that my presence here would cause you annoyance, I should have stayed away. I hope that you will think nothing of the—the mistake at the gate. You may be sure that I shall not mention it. Good night, Miss Carvel.”

He lifted his hat, mounted his horse, and was gone. She had not even known that he could ride—that was strangely the first thought. The second discovered herself intent upon the rhythm of his canter as it died southward upon the road. There was shame in this, mingled with a thankfulness that he would not meet Clarence. She hurried a few steps toward the house, and stopped again. What should she say to Clarence now? What could she say to him?

But Clarence was not in her head. Ringing there was her talk with Stephen Brice, as though it were still rapidly going on. His questions and her replies—over and over again. Each trivial incident of an encounter real and yet unreal! His transformation in the uniform, which had seemed so natural. Though she strove to make it so, nothing of all this was unbearable now, nor the remembrance of the firm torch of his arm about her nor yet again his calling her by her name.

Absently she took her way again up the drive, now pausing, now going on, forgetful. First it was alarm she felt when her cousin leaped down at her side,—then dread.

“I thought I should never get back,” he cried breathlessly, as he threw his reins to Sambo. “I ought not to have asked you to wait outside. Did it seem long, Jinny?”



She answered something, There was a seat near by under the trees. To lead her to it he seized her hand, but it was limp and cold, and a sudden fear came into his voice.

“Jinny!”

“Yes.”

She resisted, and he dropped her fingers. She remembered long how he stood in the scattered light from the bright windows, a tall, black figure of dismay. She felt the yearning in his eyes. But her own response, warm half an hour since, was lifeless.



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“Jinny,” he said, “what is the matter?”

“Nothing, Max. Only I was very foolish to say I would wait for you.”

“Then—then you won’t marry me?”

“Oh, Max,” she cried, “it is no time to talk of that now. I feel to-night as if something dreadful were to happen.”

“Do you mean war?” he asked.

“Yes,” she said. “Yes.”

“But war is what we want,” he cried, “what we have prayed for, what we have both been longing for to-night, Jinny. War alone will give us our rights—”

He stopped short. Virginia had bowed her head on her hands, and he saw her shoulders shaken by a sob. Clarence bent over her in bewilderment and anxiety.

“You are not well, Jinny,” he said.

“I am not well,” she answered. “Take me into the house.”

But when they went in at the door, he saw that her eyes were dry.

Those were the days when a dozen young ladies were in the habit of staying all night after a dance in the country; of long whispered talks (nay, not always whispered) until early morning. And of late breakfasts. Miss Russell had not been the only one who remarked Virginia’s long absence with her cousin; but Puss found her friend in one of those moods which even she dared not disturb. Accordingly Miss Russell stayed all night with Anne.

And the two spent most of the dark hours remaining in unprofitable discussion as to whether Virginia were at last engaged to her cousin, and in vain queried over another unsolved mystery. This mystery was taken up at the breakfast table the next morning, when Miss Carvel surprised Mrs. Brinsmade and the male household by appearing at half-past seven.

“Why, Jinny,” cried Mr. Brinsmade, “what does this mean? I always thought that young ladies did not get up after a ball until noon.”

Virginia smiled a little nervously.

“I am going to ask you to take me to town when you go, Mr. Brinsmade.”



“Why, certainly, my dear,” he said. “But I understood that your aunt was to send for you this afternoon from Bellegarde.”

Virginia shook her head. “There is something I wish to do in town.”

“I’ll drive her in, Pa,” said Jack. “You’re too old. Will you go with me, Jinny?”

“Of course, Jack.”

“But you must eat some breakfast, Jinny,” said Mrs Brinsmade, glancing anxiously at the girl.

Mr. Brinsmade put down his newspaper.

“Where was Stephen Brice last night, Jack?” he asked. “I understood Anne to say that he had spoke; of coming late.”

“Why, sir,” said Jack, “that’s what we can’t make out. Tom Catherwood, who is always doing queer things, you know, went to a Black Republican meeting last night, and met Stephen there. They came out in Tom’s buggy to the Russells’, and Tom got into his clothes first and rode over. Stephen was to have followed on Puss Russell’s horse. But he never got here. At least I can find no one who saw him. Did you, Jinny?”



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But Virginia did not raise her eyes from her plate. A miraculous intervention came through Mrs. Brinsmade.

“There might have been an accident, Jack,” said that lady, with concern. “Send Nicodemus over to Mrs. Russell’s at once to inquire. You know that Mr. Brice is a Northerner, and may not be able to ride.”

Jack laughed.

“He rides like a dragoon, mother,” said he. “I don’t know where he picked it up.”

“The reason I mentioned him,” said Mr. Brinsmade, lifting the blanket sheet and adjusting his spectacles, “was because his name caught my eye in this paper. His speech last night at the Library Hall is one of the few sensible Republican speeches I have read. I think it very remarkable for a man as young as he.” Mr. Brinsmade began to read: “While waiting for the speaker of the evening, who was half an hour late, Mr. Tiefel rose in the audience and called loudly for Mr. Brice. Many citizens in the hall were astonished at the cheering which followed the mention of this name. Mr. Brice is a young lawyer with a quiet manner and a determined face, who has sacrificed much to the Party’s cause this summer. He was introduced by Judge Whipple, in whose office he is. He had hardly begun to speak before he had the ear of everyone in the house. Mr. Brice’s personality is prepossessing, his words are spoken sharply, and he has a singular emphasis at times which seems to drive his arguments into the minds of his hearers. We venture to say that if party orators here and elsewhere were as logical and temperate as Mr. Brice; if, like him, they appealed to reason rather than to passion, those bitter and lamentable differences which threaten our country’s peace might be amicably adjusted.’ Let me read what he said.”

But he was interrupted by the rising of Virginia. A high color was on the girl’s face as she said:

“Please excuse me, Mrs. Brinsmade, I must go and get ready.”

“But you’ve eaten nothing, my dear.”

Virginia did not reply. She was already on the stairs.

“You ought not have read that, Pa,” Mr. Jack remonstrated; “you know that she detests Yankees”

CHAPTER XIV

*The breach becomes too wide
Abraham Lincoln!*



At the foot of Breed's Hill in Charlestown an American had been born into the world, by the might of whose genius that fateful name was sped to the uttermost parts of the nation. Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. And the moan of the storm gathering in the South grew suddenly loud and louder.

Stephen Brice read the news in the black headlines and laid down the newspaper, a sense of the miraculous upon him. There again was the angled, low-celled room of the country tavern, reeking with food and lamps and perspiration; for a central figure the man of surpassing homeliness,—coatless, tieless, and vestless,—telling a story in the vernacular. He reflected that it might well seem strange yea, and intolerable—to many that this comedian of the country store, this crude lawyer and politician, should inherit the seat dignified by Washington and the Adamses.

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And yet Stephen believed. For to him had been vouchsafed the glimpse beyond.

That was a dark winter that followed, the darkest in our history. Gloom and despondency came fast upon the heels of Republican exultation. Men rose early for tidings from Charleston, the storm centre. The Union was cracking here and there. Would it crumble in pieces before Abraham Lincoln got to Washington?

One smoky morning early in December Stephen arrived late at the office to find Richter sitting idle on his stool, concern graven on his face.

“The Judge has had no breakfast, Stephen,” he whispered. “Listen! Shadrach tells me he has been doing that since six this morning, when he got his newspaper.”

Stephen listened, and he heard the Judge pacing and pacing in his room. Presently the door was flung open, and they saw Mr. Whipple standing in the threshold, stern and dishevelled. Astonishment did not pause here. He came out and sat down in Stephen’s chair, striking the newspaper in his hand, and they feared at first that his Mind had wandered.

“Propitiate!” he cried, “propitiate, propitiate, and again propitiate. How long, O Lord?” Suddenly he turned upon Stephen, who was frightened. But now his voice was natural, and he thrust the paper into the young man’s lap. “Have you read the President’s message to Congress, sir? God help me that I am spared to call that wobbling Buchanan President. Read it. Read it, sir. You have a legal brain. Perhaps you can tell me why, if a man admits that it is wrong for a state to abandon this Union, he cannot call upon Congress for men and money to bring her back. No, this weakling lets Floyd stock the Southern arsenals. He pays tribute to Barbary. He is for bribing them not to be angry. Take Cuba from Spain, says he, and steal the rest of Mexico that the maw of slavery may be filled, and the demon propitiated.”

They dared not answer him. And so he went back into his room, shutting the door. That day no clients saw him, even those poor ones dependent on his charity whom had never before denied. Richter and Stephen took counsel together, and sent Shadrach out for his dinner.

Three weeks passed. There arrived a sparkling Sunday, brought down the valley of the Missouri from the frozen northwest. The Saturday had been soggy and warm.

Thursday had seen South Carolina leave that Union into which she was born, amid prayers and the ringing of bells. Tuesday was to be Christmas day. A young lady, who had listened to a solemn sermon of Dr. Posthelwaite’s, slipped out of Church before the prayers were ended, and hurried into that deserted portion of the town about the Court House where on week days business held its sway.



She stopped once at the bottom of the grimy flight of steps leading to Judge Whipple's office. At the top she paused again, and for a short space stood alert, her glance resting on the little table in the corner, on top of which a few thumbed law books lay neatly piled. Once she made a hesitating step in this direction. Then, as if by a resolution quickly taken, she turned her back and softly opened the door of the Judge's room. He was sitting upright in his chair. A book was open in his lap, but it did not seem to Virginia that he was reading it.



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“Uncle Silas,” she said, “aren’t you coming to dinner any more?”

He looked up swiftly from under his shaggy brows. The book fell to the floor.

“Uncle Silas,” said Virginia, bravely, “I came to get you to-day.”

Never before had she known him to turn away from man or woman, but now Judge Whipple drew his handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose violently. A woman’s intuition told her that locked tight in his heart was what he longed to say, and could not. The shiny black overcoat he wore was on the bed. Virginia picked it up and held it out to him, an appeal in her eyes.

He got into it. Then she handed him his hat. Many people walking home from church that morning marvelled as they saw these two on Locust Street together, the young girl supporting the elderly man over the slippery places at the crossings. For neighbor had begun to look coldly upon neighbor.

Colonel Carvel beheld them from his armchair by the sitting-room window, and leaned forward with a start. His lips moved as he closed his Bible reverently and marked his place. At the foot of the stairs he surprised Jackson by waving him aside, for the Colonel himself flung open the door and held out his hand to his friend. The Judge released Virginia’s arm, and his own trembled as he gave it.

“Silas,” said the Colonel, “Silas, we’ve missed you.”

Virginia stood by, smiling, but her breath came deeply. Had she done right? Could any good come of it all? Judge Whipple did not go in at the door—He stood uncompromisingly planted on the threshold, his head flung back, and actual fierceness in his stare.

“Do you guess we can keep off the subject, Comyn?” he demanded.

Even Mr. Carvel, so used to the Judge’s ways, was a bit taken aback by this question. It set him tugging at his goatee, and his voice was not quite steady as he answered:

“God knows, Silas. We are human, and we can only try.”

Then Mr. Whipple marched in. It lacked a quarter of an hour of dinner, —a crucial period to tax the resources of any woman. Virginia led the talk, but oh, the pathetic lameness of it. Her own mind was wandering when it should not, and recollections she had tried to strangle had sprung up once more. Only that morning in church she had lived over again the scene by Mr. Brinsmade’s gate, and it was then that a wayward but resistless impulse to go to the Judge’s office had seized her. The thought of the old man lonely and bitter in his room decided her. On her knees she prayed that she might save the bond between him and her father. For the Colonel had been morose on



Sundays, and had taken to reading the Bible, a custom he had not had since she was a child.

In the dining-room Jackson, bowing and smiling, pulled out the Judge's chair, and got his customary curt nod as a reward. Virginia carved.



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“Oh, Uncle Silas,” she cried, “I am so glad that we have a wild turkey. And you shall have your side-bone.” The girl carved deftly, feverishly, talking the while, aided by that most kind and accomplished of hosts, her father. In the corner the dreaded skeleton of the subject grinned sardonically. Were they going to be able to keep it off? There was to be no help from Judge Whipple, who sat in grim silence. A man who feels his soul burning is not given to small talk. Virginia alone had ever possessed the power to make him forget.

“Uncle Silas, I am sure there are some things about our trip that we never told you. How we saw Napoleon and his beautiful Empress driving in the Bois, and how Eugenie smiled and bowed at the people. I never saw such enthusiasm in my life. And oh, I learned such a lot of French history. All about Francis the First, and Pa took me to see his chateaus along the Loire. Very few tourists go there. You really ought to have gone with us.”

Take care, Virginia!

“I had other work to do, Jinny,” said the Judge.

Virginia rattled an.

“I told you that we stayed with a real lord in England, didn’t I?” said she. “He wasn’t half as nice as the Prince. But he had a beautiful house in Surrey, all windows, which was built in Elizabeth’s time. They called the architecture Tudor, didn’t they, Pa?”

“Yes, dear,” said the Colonel, smiling.

“The Countess was nice to me,” continued the girl, “and took me to garden parties. But Lord Jermyn was always talking politics.”

The Colonel was stroking his goatee.

“Tell Silas about the house, Jinny—Jackson, help the Judge again.”

“No,” said Virginia, drawing a breath. “I’m going to tell him about that queer club where my great-grand-father used to bet with Charles Fox. We saw a great many places where Richard Carvel had been in England. That was before the Revolution. Uncle Daniel read me some of his memoirs when we were at Calvert House. I know that you would be interested in them, Uncle Silas. He sailed under Paul Jones.”

“And fought for his country and for his flag, Virginia,” said the Judge, who had scarcely spoken until then. “No, I could not bear to read them now, when those who should love that country are leaving it in passion.”



There was a heavy silence. Virginia did not dare to look at her father. But the Colonel said, gently:

“Not in passion, Silas, but in sorrow.”

The Judge tightened his lips. But the effort was beyond him, and the flood within him broke loose.

“Colonel Carvel,” he cried, “South Carolina is mad—She is departing in sin, in order that a fiendish practice may be perpetuated. If her people stopped to think they would know that slavery cannot exist except by means of this Union. But let this milksop of a President do his worst. We have chosen a man who has the strength to say, ‘You shall not go!’”



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It was an awful moment. The saving grace of it was that respect and love for her father filled Virginia's heart. In his just anger Colonel Carvel remembered that he was the host, and strove to think only of his affection for his old friend.

"To invade a sovereign state, sir, is a crime against the sacred spirit of this government," he said.

"There is no such thing as a sovereign state, sir," exclaimed the Judge, hotly. I am an American, and not a Missourian."

"When the time comes, sir," said the Colonel, with dignity, "Missouri will join with her sister sovereign states against oppression."

"Missouri will not secede, sir."

"Why not, sir!" demanded the Colonel.

Because, sir, when the worst comes, the Soothing Syrup men will rally for the Union. And there are enough loyal people here to keep her straight."

"Dutchmen, sir! Hessians? Foreign Republican hirelings, sir," exclaimed the Colonel, standing up. "We shall drive them like sheep if they oppose us. You are drilling them now that they may murder your own blood when you think the time is ripe."

The Colonel did not hear Virginia leave the room, so softly had she gone, He made a grand figure of a man as he stood up, straight and tall, those gray eyes a-kinde at last. But the fire died as quickly as it had flared. Pity had come and quenched it,—pity that an unselfish life of suffering and loneliness should be crowned with these. The Colonel longed then to clasp his friend in his arms. Quarrels they had had by the hundred, never yet a misunderstanding. God had given to Silas Whipple a nature stern and harsh that repelled all save the charitable few whose gift it was to see below the surface, and Colonel Carvel had been the chief of them. But now the Judge's vision was clouded.

Steadying himself by his chair, he had risen glaring, the loose skin twitching on his sallow face. He began firmly but his voice shook ere he had finished.

"Colonel Carvel," said he, "I expect that the day has come when you go your way and I go mine. It will be better if—we do not meet again, sir."

And so he turned from the man whose friendship had stayed him for the score of years he had battled with his enemies, from that house which had been for so long his only home. For the last time Jackson came forward to help him with his coat. The Judge did not see him, nor did he see the tearful face of a young girl leaning over the banisters above. Ice was on the stones. And Mr. Whipple, blinded by a moisture strange to his



eyes, clung to the iron railing as he felt his way down the steps. Before he reached the bottom a stronger arm had seized his own, and was helping him.

The Judge brushed his eyes with his sleeve, and turned a defiant face upon Captain Elijah Brent—then his voice broke. His anger was suddenly gone, and his thought had flown back to the Colonel's thousand charities.



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“Lige,” he said, “Lige, it has come.”

In answer the Captain pressed the Judge’s hand, nodding vigorously to hide his rising emotion. There was a pause.

“And you, Lige?” said Mr. Whipple, presently.

“My God!” cried the Captain, “I wish I knew.”

“Lige,” said the Judge, gravely, “you’re too good a man to be for Soothing Syrup.”

The Captain choked.

“You’re too smart to be fooled, Lige,” he said, with a note near to pleading. “The time has come when you Bell people and the Douglas people have got to decide. Never in my life did I know it to do good to dodge a question. We’ve got to be white or black, Lige. Nobody’s got much use for the grays. And don’t let yourself be fooled with Constitutional Union Meetings, and compromises. The time is almost here, Lige, when it will take a rascal to steer a middle course.”

Captain Lige listened, and he shifted from one foot to the other, and rubbed his hands, which were red. Some odd trick of the mind had put into his head two people—Eliphalet Hopper and Jacob Cluyme. Was he like them?

“Lige, you’ve got to decide. Do you love your country, sir? Can you look on while our own states defy us, and not lift a hand? Can you sit still while the Governor and all the secessionists in this state are plotting to take Missouri, too, out of the Union? The militia is riddled with rebels, and the rest are forming companies of minute men.”

“And you Black Republicans,” the Captain cried “have organized your Dutch Wideawakes, and are arming them to resist Americans born.”

“They are Americans by our Constitution, sir, which the South pretends to revere,” cried the Judge. “And they are showing themselves better Americans than many who have been on the soil for generations.”

“My sympathies are with the South,” said the Captain, doggedly, “and my love is for the South.”

“And your conscience?” said the Judge.

There was no answer. Both men raised their eyes to the house of him whose loving hospitality had been a light in the lives of both. When at last the Captain spoke, his voice was rent with feeling.



“Judge,” he began, “when I was a poor young man on the old ‘Vicksburg’, second officer under old Stetson, Colonel Carvel used to take me up to his house on Fourth Street to dinner. And he gave me the clothes on my back, so that I might not be ashamed before the fashion which came there. He treated me like a son, sir. One day the sheriff sold the Vicksburg. You remember it. That left me high and dry in the mud. Who bought her, sir? Colonel Carvel. And he says to me, ‘Lige, you’re captain now, the youngest captain on the river. And she’s your boat. You can pay me principal and interest when you get ready.’”

“Judge Whipple, I never had any other home than right in, this house. I never had any other pleasure than bringing Jinny presents, and tryin’ to show ’em gratitude. He took me into his house and cared for me at a time when I wanted to go to the devil along with the stevedores when I was a wanderer he kept me out of the streets, and out of temptation. Judge, I’d a heap rather go down and jump off the stern of my boat than step in here and tell him I’d fight for the North.”



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The Judge steadied himself on his hickory stick and walked off without a word. For a while Captain Lige stood staring after him. Then he slowly climbed the steps and disappeared.

CHAPTER, XV

MUTTERINGS

Early in the next year, 1861,—that red year in the Calendar of our history,—several gentlemen met secretly in the dingy counting-room of a prominent citizen to consider how the state of Missouri might be saved to the Union. One of these gentlemen was Judge Whipple, another, Mr. Brinsmade; and another a masterly and fearless lawyer who afterward became a general, and who shall be mentioned in these pages as the Leader. By his dash and boldness and statesmanlike grasp of a black situation St. Louis was snatched from the very bosom of secession.

Alas, that chronicles may not stretch so as to embrace all great men of a time. There is Captain Nathaniel Lyon,—name with the fateful ring. Nathaniel Lyon, with the wild red hair and blue eye, born and bred a soldier, ordered to St. Louis, and become subordinate to a wavering officer of ordnance. Lyon was one who brooked no trifling. He had the face of a man who knows his mind and intention; the quick speech and action which go with this. Red tape made by the reel to bind him, he broke. Courts-martial had no terrors for him. He proved the ablest of lieutenants to the strong civilian who was the Leader. Both were the men of the occasion. If God had willed that the South should win, there would have been no occasion.

Even as Judge Whipple had said, the time was come for all men to decide. Out of the way, all hopes of compromises that benumbed Washington. No Constitutional Unionists, no Douglas Democrats, no Republicans now.

All must work to save the ship. The speech-making was not done with yet. Partisanship must be overcome, and patriotism instilled in its place. One day Stephen Brice saw the Leader go into Judge Whipple's room, and presently he was sent for. After that he was heard of in various out-of-the-way neighborhoods, exhorting all men to forget their quarrels and uphold the flag.

The Leader himself knew not night from day in his toil,—in organizing, conciliating, compelling when necessary. Letters passed between him and Springfield. And, after that solemn inauguration, between him and Washington. It was an open secret that the Governor of Missouri held out his arms to Jefferson Davis, just elected President of the new Southern Confederacy. It soon became plain to the feeblest brain what the Leader and his friends had perceived long before, that the Governor intended to use the militia (purged of Yankee sympathizers) to save the state for the South.

The Government Arsenal, with its stores of arms and ammunition, was the prize. This building and its grounds lay to the south of the City, overlooking the river. It was in command of a doubting major of ordnance; the corps of officers of Jefferson Barracks hard by was mottled with secession. Trade was still. The Mississippi below was practically closed. In all the South, Pickens and Sumter alone stood stanch to the flag. A general, wearing the uniform of the army of the United States, surrendered the whole state of Texas.

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The St. Louis Arsenal was next in succession, and the little band of regulars at the Barracks was powerless to save it. What could the Leader and Captain Lyon do without troops? That was the question that rang in Stephen's head, and in the heads of many others. For, if President Lincoln sent troops to St. Louis, that would precipitate the trouble. And the President had other uses for the handful in the army.

There came a rain-sodden night when a mysterious message arrived at the little house in Olive Street. Both anxiety and pride were in Mrs. Brice's eyes as they followed her son out of the door. At Twelfth Street two men were lounging on the corners, each of whom glanced at him listlessly as he passed. He went up a dark and narrow stair into a lighted hall with shrouded windows. Men with sober faces were forming line on the sawdust of the floors. The Leader was there giving military orders in a low voice. That marked the beginning of the aggressive Union movement.

Stephen, standing apart at the entrance, remarked that many of the men were Germans. Indeed, he spied his friend Tiefel there, and presently Richter came from the ranks to greet him.

"My friend," he said, "you are made second lieutenant of our company, the Black Jaegers."

"But I have never drilled in my life," said Stephen.

"Never mind. Come and see the Leader."

The Leader, smiling a little, put a vigorous stop to his protestations, and told him to buy a tactics. The next man Stephen saw was big Tom Catherwood, who blushed to the line of his hair as he returned Stephen's grip.

"Tom, what does this mean?" He asked.

"Well," said Tom, embarrassed, "a fellow has got to do what he think's right."

"And your family?" asked Stephen.

A spasm crossed Tom's face.

"I reckon they'll disown me, Stephen, when they find it out."

Richter walked home as far as Stephen's house. He was to take the Fifth Street car for South St. Louis. And they talked of Tom's courage, and of the broad and secret military organization the Leader had planned that night. But Stephen did not sleep till the dawn. Was he doing right? Could he afford to risk his life in the war that was coming, and leave his mother dependent upon charity?



It was shortly after this that Stephen paid his last visit for many a long day upon Miss Puss Russell. It was a Sunday afternoon, and Puss was entertaining, as usual, a whole parlor-full of young men, whose leanings and sympathies Stephen divined while taking off his coat in the hall. Then he heard Miss Russell cry:

“I believe that they are drilling those nasty Dutch hirelings in secret.”

“I am sure they are,” said George Catherwood. “One of the halls is on Twelfth Street, and they have sentries posted out so that you can’t get near them. Pa has an idea that Tom goes there. And he told him that if he ever got evidence of it, he’d show him the door.”



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“Do you really think that Tom is with the Yankees?” asked Jack Brinsmade.

“Tom’s a fool,” said George, with emphasis, “but he isn’t a coward. He’d just as soon tell Pa to-morrow that he was drilling if the Yankee leaders wished it known.”

“Virginia will never speak to him again,” said Eugenie, in an awed voice.

“Pooh!” said Puss, “Tom never had a chance with Jinny. Did he, George? Clarence is in high favor now. Did you ever know any one to change so, since this military business has begun? He acts like a colonel. I hear that they are thinking of making him captain of a company of dragoons.”

“They are,” George answered. “And that is the company I intend to join.”

“Well,” began Puss, with her usual recklessness, “it’s a good thing for Clarence that all this is happening. I know somebody else—”

Poor Stephen in the hall knew not whether to stay or fly. An accident decided the question. Emily Russell came down the stairs at that instant and spoke to him. As the two entered the parlor, there was a hush pregnant with many things unsaid. Puss’s face was scarlet, but her hand was cold as she held it out to him. For the first time in that house he felt like an intruder. Jack Brinsmade bowed with great ceremony, and took his departure. There was scarcely a distant cordiality in the greeting of the other young men. And Puss, whose tongue was loosed again, talked rapidly of entertainments to which Stephen either had not been invited, or from which he had stayed away. The rest of the company were almost moodily silent.

Profoundly depressed, Stephen sat straight in the velvet chair, awaiting a seasonable time to bring his visit to a close.

This was to be the last, then, of his intercourse with a warmhearted and lovable people. This was to be the end of his friendship with this impetuous and generous girl who had done so much to brighten his life since he had come to St. Louis. Henceforth this house would be shut to him, and all others save Mr. Brinsmade’s.

Presently, in one of the intervals of Miss Russell’s feverish talk, he rose to go. Dusk was gathering, and a deep and ominous silence penetrated like the shadows into the tall room. No words came to him. Impulsively, almost tearfully, Puss put her hand in his. Then she pressed it unexpectedly, so that he had to gulp down a lump that was in his throat. Just then a loud cry was heard from without, the men jumped from their chairs, and something heavy dropped on the carpet.

Some ran to the window, others to the door. Directly across the street was the house of Mr. Harmsworth, a noted Union man. One of the third story windows was open, and out



of it was pouring a mass of gray wood smoke. George Catherwood was the first to speak.

“I hope it will burn down,” he cried.

Stephen picked up the object on the floor, which had dropped from his pocket, and handed it to him.

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It was a revolver.