

Crisis, the — Volume 06 eBook

Crisis, the — Volume 06 by Winston Churchill

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INTRODUCING A CAPITALIST

A cordon of blue regiments surrounded the city at first from Carondelet to North St. Louis, like an open fan. The crowds liked best to go to Compton Heights, where the tents of the German citizen-soldiers were spread out like so many slices of white cake on the green beside the city's reservoir. Thence the eye stretched across the town, catching the dome of the Court House and the spire of St. John's. Away to the west, on the line of the Pacific railroad that led halfway across the state, was another camp. Then another, and another, on the circle of the fan, until the river was reached to the northward, far above the bend. Within was a peace that passed understanding,—the peace of martial law.

Without the city, in the great state beyond, an irate governor had gathered his forces from the east and from the west. Letters came and went between Jefferson City and Jefferson Davis, their purport being that the Governor was to work out his own salvation, for a while at least. Young men of St. Louis, struck in a night by the fever of militarism, arose and went to Glencoe. Prying sergeants and commissioned officers, mostly of hated German extraction, thundered at the door of Colonel Carvel's house, and other houses, there—for Glencoe was a border town. They searched the place more than once from garret to cellar, muttered guttural oaths, and smelled of beer and sauerkraut. The haughty appearance of Miss Carvel did not awe them—they were blind to all manly sensations. The Colonel's house, alas, was one of many in Glencoe written down in red ink in a book at headquarters as a place toward which the feet of the young men strayed. Good evidence was handed in time and time again that the young men had come and gone, and red-faced commanding officers cursed indignant subalterns, and implied that Beauty had had a hand in it. Councils of war were held over the advisability of seizing Mr. Carvel's house at Glencoe, but proof was lacking until one rainy night in June a captain and ten men spurred up the drive and swung into a big circle around the house. The Captain took off his cavalry gauntlet and knocked at the door, more gently than usual. Miss Virginia was home so Jackson said. The Captain was given an audience more formal than one with the queen of Prussia could have been, Miss Carvel was infinitely more haughty than her Majesty. Was not the Captain hired to do a degrading service? Indeed, he thought so as he followed her about the house and he felt like the lowest of criminals as he opened a closet door or looked under a bed. He was a beast of the field, of the mire. How Virginia shrank from him if he had occasion to pass her! Her gown would have been defiled by his touch. And yet the Captain did not smell of beer, nor of sauerkraut; nor did he swear in any language. He did his duty apologetically, but he did it. He pulled a man (aged seventeen) out from under a great hoop skirt in a little closet, and the man had a pistol that refused its duty when snapped in the Captain's face. This was little Spencer Catherwood, just home from a military academy.

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Spencer was taken through the rain by the chagrined Captain to the headquarters, where he caused a little embarrassment. No damning evidence was discovered on his person, for the pistol had long since ceased to be a firearm. And so after a stiff lecture from the Colonel he was finally given back into the custody of his father. Despite the pickets, the young men filtered through daily,—or rather nightly. Presently some of them began to come back, gaunt and worn and tattered, among the grim cargoes that were landed by the thousands and tens of thousands on the levee. And they took them (oh, the pity of it!) they took them to Mr. Lynch's slave pen, turned into a Union prison of detention, where their fathers and grandfathers had been wont to send their disorderly and insubordinate niggers. They were packed away, as the miserable slaves had been, to taste something of the bitterness of the negro's lot. So came Bert Russell to welter in a low room whose walls gave out the stench of years. How you cooked for them, and schemed for them, and cried for them, you devoted women of the South! You spent the long hot summer in town, and every day you went with your baskets to Gratiot Street, where the infected old house stands, until—until one morning a lady walked out past the guard, and down the street. She was civilly detained at the corner, because she wore army boots. After that permits were issued. If you were a young lady of the proper principles in those days, you climbed a steep pair of stairs in the heat, and stood in line until it became your turn to be catechised by an indifferent young officer in blue who sat behind a table and smoked a horrid cigar. He had little time to be courteous. He was not to be dazzled by a bright gown or a pretty face; he was indifferent to a smile which would have won a savage. His duty was to look down into your heart, and extract therefrom the nefarious scheme you had made to set free the man you loved ere he could be sent north to Alton or Columbus. My dear, you wish to rescue him, to disguise him, send him south by way of Colonel Carvel's house at Glencoe. Then he will be killed. At least, he will have died for the South.

First politics, and then war, and then more politics, in this our country. Your masterful politician obtains a regiment, and goes to war, sword in hand. He fights well, but he is still the politician. It was not a case merely of fighting for the Union, but first of getting permission to fight. Camp Jackson taken, and the prisoners exchanged south, Captain Lyon; who moved like a whirlwind, who loved the Union beyond his own life, was thrust down again. A mutual agreement was entered into between the Governor and the old Indian fighter in command of the Western Department, to respect each other. A trick for the Rebels. How Lyon chafed, and paced the Arsenal walks while he might have saved the state. Then two gentlemen went to Washington, and the next thing that happened was Brigadier General Lyon, Commander of the Department of the West.



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Would General Lyon confer with the Governor of Missouri? Yes, the General would give the Governor a safe-conduct into St. Louis, but his Excellency must come to the General. His Excellency came, and the General deigned to go with the Union leader to the Planters House. Conference, five hours; result, a safe-conduct for the Governor back. And this is how General Lyon ended the talk. His words, generously preserved by a Confederate colonel who accompanied his Excellency, deserve to be writ in gold on the National Annals.

“Rather than concede to the state of Missouri the right to demand that my Government shall not enlist troops within her limits, or bring troops into the state whenever it pleases; or move its troops at its own will into, out of, or through, the state; rather than concede to the state of Missouri for one single instant the right to dictate to my Government in any matter, however unimportant, I would” (rising and pointing in turn to every one in the room) “see you, and you, and you, and you, and every man, woman, and child in this state, dead and buried.” Then, turning to the Governor, he continued, “This means war. In an hour one of my officers will call for you and conduct you out of my lines.”

And thus, without another word, without an inclination of the head, he turned upon his heel and strode out of the room, rattling his spurs and clanking his sabre.

It did mean war. In less than two months that indomitable leader was lying dead beside Wilson’s Creek, among the oaks on Bloody Hill. What he would have been to this Union, had God spared him, we shall never know. He saved Missouri, and won respect and love from the brave men who fought against him.

Those first fierce battles in the state! What prayers rose to heaven, and curses sank to hell, when the news of them came to the city by the river! Flags were made by loving fingers, and shirts and bandages. Trembling young ladies of Union sympathies presented colors to regiments on the Arsenal Green, or at Jefferson Barracks, or at Camp Benton to the northwest near the Fair Grounds. And then the regiments marched through the streets with bands playing that march to which the words of the Battle Hymn were set, and those bright ensigns snapping at the front; bright now, and new, and crimson. But soon to be stained a darker red, and rent into tatters, and finally brought back and talked over and cried over, and tenderly laid above an inscription in a glass case, to be revered by generations of Americans to confer What can stir the soul more than the sight of those old flags, standing in ranks like the veterans they are, whose duty has been nobly done? The blood of the color-sergeant is there, black now with age. But where are the tears of the sad women who stitched the red and the white and the blue together?

The regiments marched through the streets and aboard the boats, and pushed off before a levee of waving handkerchiefs and nags. Then heart-breaking suspense. Later—much later, black headlines, and grim lists three columns long,—three columns of a blanket sheet! “The City of Alton has arrived with the following Union dead and

wounded, and the following Confederate wounded (prisoners).” Why does the type run together?



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In a never-ceasing procession they steamed up the river; those calm boats which had been wont to carry the white cargoes of Commerce now bearing the red cargoes of war. And they bore away to new battlefields thousands of fresh-faced boys from Wisconsin and Michigan and Minnesota, gathered at Camp Benton. Some came back with their color gone and their red cheeks sallow and bearded and sunken. Others came not back at all.

Stephen Brice, with a pain over his heart and a lump in his throat, walked on the pavement beside his old company, but his look avoided their faces. He wrung Richter's hand on the landing-stage. Richter was now a captain. The good German's eyes were filled as he said good-by.

"You will come, too, my friend, when the country needs you," he said. "Now" (and he shrugged his shoulders), "now have we many with no cares to go. I have not even a father—" And he turned to Judge Whipple, who was standing by, holding out a bony hand.

"God bless you, Carl," said the Judge And Carl could scarce believe his ears. He got aboard the boat, her decks already blue with troops, and as she backed out with her whistle screaming, the last objects he saw were the gaunt old man and the broad-shouldered young man side by side on the edge of the landing.

Stephen's chest heaved, and as he walked back to the office with the Judge, he could not trust himself to speak. Back to the silent office where the shelves mocked them. The Judge closed the ground-glass door behind him, and Stephen sat until five o'clock over a book. No, it was not Whittlesey, but Hardee's "Tactics." He shut it with a slam, and went to Verandah Hall to drill recruits on a dusty floor,—narrow-chested citizens in suspenders, who knew not the first motion in right about face. For Stephen was an adjutant in the Home Guards—what was left of them.

One we know of regarded the going of the troops and the coming of the wounded with an equanimity truly philosophical. When the regiments passed Carvel & Company on their way riverward to embark, Mr. Hopper did not often take the trouble to rise from his chair, nor was he ever known to go to the door to bid them Godspeed. This was all very well, because they were Union regiments. But Mr. Hopper did not contribute a horse, nor even a saddle-blanket, to the young men who went away secretly in the night, without fathers or mothers or sisters to wave at them. Mr. Hopper had better use for his money.

One scorching afternoon in July Colonel Carvel came into the office, too hurried to remark the pain in honest Ephum's face as he watched his master. The sure signs of a harassed man were on the Colonel. Since May he had neglected his business affairs for others which he deemed public, and which were so mysterious that even Mr. Hopper could not get wind of them. These matters had taken the Colonel out of town. But now



the necessity of a pass made that awkward, and he went no farther than Glencoe, where he spent an occasional Sunday. Today Mr. Hopper rose from his chair when Mr. Carvel entered,—a most unprecedented action. The Colonel cleared his throat. Sitting down at his desk, he drummed upon it uneasily.

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“Mr. Hopper!” he said at length.

Eliphalet crossed the room quickly, and something that was very near a smile was on his face. He sat down close to Mr. Carvel’s chair with a semi-confidential air,—one wholly new, had the Colonel given it a thought. He did not, but began to finger some printed slips of paper which had indorsements on their backs. His fine lips were tightly closed, as if in pain.

“Mr. Hopper,” he said, “these Eastern notes are due this week, are they not?”

“Yes, sir.”

The Colonel glanced up swiftly.

“There is no use mincing matters, Hopper. You know as well as I that there is no money to pay them,” said he, with a certain pompous attempt at severity which characterized his kind nature. “You have served me well. You have brought this business up to a modern footing, and made it as prosperous as any in the town. I am sorry, sir, that those contemptible Yankees should have forced us to the use of arms, and cut short many promising business careers such as yours, sir. But we have to face the music. We have to suffer for our principles.

“These notes cannot be met, Mr. Hopper.” And the good gentleman looked out of the window. He was thinking of a day, before the Mexican War, when his young wife had sat in the very chair filled by Mr. Hopper now. “These notes cannot be met,” he repeated, and his voice was near to breaking.

The flies droning in the hot office made the only sound. Outside the partition, among the bales, was silence.

“Colonel,” said Mr. Hopper, with a remarkable ease, “I cal’late these notes can be met.”

The Colonel jumped as if he had heard a shot, and one of the notes fell to the floor. Eliphalet picked it up tenderly, and held it.

“What do you mean, sir?” Mr. Carvel cried. “There isn’t a bank in town that will lend me money. I—I haven’t a friend—a friend I may ask who can spare it, sir.”

Mr. Hopper lifted up his hand. It was a fat hand. Suavity was come upon it like a new glove and changed the man. He was no longer cringing. Now he had poise, such poise as we in these days are accustomed to see in leather and mahogany offices. The Colonel glared at him uncomfortably.

“I will take up those notes myself, sir.”



“You!” cried the Colonel, incredulously, “You?”

We must do Eliphalet justice. There was not a deal of hypocrisy in his nature, and now he did not attempt the part of Samaritan. He did not beam upon the Colonel and remind him of the day on which, homeless and friendless, he had been frightened into his store by a drove of mules. No. But his day,—the day toward which he had striven unknown and unnoticed for so many years—the day when he would laugh at the pride of those who had ignored and insulted him, was dawning at last. When we are thoughtless of our words, we do not reckon with that spark in little bosoms that may burst into flame and burn us. Not that Colonel Carvel had ever been aught but courteous and kind to all. His station in life had been his offence to Eliphalet, who strove now to hide an exultation that made him tremble.



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“What do you mean, sir?” demanded the Colonel, again.

“I cal’late that I can gather together enough to meet the notes, Colonel. Just a little friendly transaction.” Here followed an interval of sheer astonishment to Mr. Carvel.

“You have this money?” he said at length. Mr. Hopper nodded.

“And you will take my note for the amount?”

“Yes, sir.”

The Colonel pulled his goatee, and sat back in his chair, trying to face the new light in which he saw his manager. He knew well enough that the man was not doing this out of charity, or even gratitude. He reviewed his whole career, from that first morning when he had carried bales to the shipping room, to his replacement of Mr. Hood, and there was nothing with which to accuse him. He remembered the warnings of Captain Lige and Virginia. He could not in honor ask a cent from the Captain now. He would not ask his sister-in-law, Mrs. Colfax, to let him touch the money he had so ably invested for her; that little which Virginia’s mother had left the girl was sacred.

Night after night Mr. Carvel had lain awake with the agony of those Eastern debts. Not to pay was to tarnish the name of a Southern gentleman. He could not sell the business. His house would bring nothing in these times. He rose and began to pace the floor, tugging at his chin. Twice he paused to stare at Mr. Hopper, who sat calmly on, and the third time stopped abruptly before him.

“See here,” he cried. “Where the devil did you get this money, sir?”

Mr. Hopper did not rise.

“I haven’t been extravagant, Colonel, since I’ve worked for you,” he said. “It don’t cost me much to live. I’ve been fortunate in investments.”

The furrows in the Colonel’s brow deepened.

“You offer to lend me five times more than I have ever paid you, Mr. Hopper. Tell me how you have made this money before I accept it.”

Eliphalet had never been able to meet that eye since he had known it. He did not meet it now. But he went to his desk, and drew a long sheet of paper from a pigeonhole.

“These be some of my investments,” he answered, with just a tinge of surliness. “I cal’late they’ll stand inspection. I ain’t forcing you to take the money, sir,” he flared up, all at once. “I’d like to save the business.”



Mr. Carvel was disarmed. He went unsteadily to his desk, and none save God knew the shock that his pride received that day. To rescue a name which had stood untarnished since he had brought it into the world, he drew forth some blank notes, and filled them out. But before he signed them he spoke:

“You are a business man, Mr. Hopper,” said he, “And as a business man you must know that these notes will not legally hold. It is martial law. The courts are abolished, and all transactions here in St. Louis are invalid.”

Eliphalet was about to speak.

“One moment, sir,” cried the Colonel, standing up and towering to his full height. “Law or no law, you shall have the money and interest, or your security, which is this business. I need not tell you, sir, that my word is sacred, and binding forever upon me and mine.”

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"I'm not afraid, Colonel," answered Mr. Hopper, with a feeble attempt at geniality. He was, in truth, awed at last.

"You need not be, sir!" said the Colonel, with equal force. "If you were —this instant you should leave this place." He sat down, and continued more calmly: "It will not be long before a Southern Army marches into St. Louis, and the Yankee Government submits." He leaned forward. "Do you reckon we can hold the business together until then, Mr. Hopper?"

God forbid that we should smile at the Colonel's simple faith. And if Eliphalet Hopper had done so, his history would have ended here.

"Leave that to me, Colonel," he said soberly.

Then came the reaction. The good Colonel sighed as he signed, away that business which had been an honor to the city where it was founded, I thank heaven that we are not concerned with the details of their talk that day. Why should we wish to know the rate of interest on those notes, or the time? It was war-time.

Mr. Hopper filled out his check, and presently departed. It was the signal for the little force which remained to leave. Outside, in the store; Ephum paced uneasily, wondering why his master did not come out. Presently he crept to the door of the office, pushed it open, and beheld Mr. Carvel with his head bowed, down in his hands.

"Marse Comyn!" he cried, "Marse Comyn!"

The Colonel looked up. His face was haggard.

"Marse Comyn, you know what I done promise young *miss* long time ago, befo'—befo' she done left us?"

"Yes, Ephum."

He saw the faithful old negro but dimly. Faintly he heard the pleading voice.

"Marse Comyn, won' you give Ephum a pass down, river, ter fotch Cap'n Lige?"

"Ephum," said the Colonel, sadly, "I had a letter from the Captain yesterday. He is at Cairo. His boat is a Federal transport, and he is in Yankee pay."

Ephum took a step forward, appealingly, "But de Cap'n's yo' friend, Marse Comyn. He ain't never fo'get what you done fo' him, Marse Comyn. He ain't in de army, suh."

“And I am the Captain’s friend, Ephum,” answered the Colonel, quietly. “But I will not ask aid from any man employed by the Yankee Government. No—not from my own brother, who is in a Pennsylvania regiments.”

Ephum shuffled out, and his heart was lead as he closed the store that night.

Mr. Hopper has boarded a Fifth Street car, which jangles on with many halts until it comes to Bremen, a German settlement in the north of the city. At Bremen great droves of mules fill the street, and crowd the entrances of the sale stables there. Whips are cracking like pistol shots, Gentlemen with the yellow cavalry stripe of the United States Army are pushing to and fro among the drivers and the owners, and fingering the frightened animals. A herd breaks from the confusion and is driven like a whirlwind down the street, dividing at the Market House. They are going to board the Government transport—to die on the battlefields of Kentucky and Missouri.



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Mr. Hopper alights from the car with complacency. He stands for a while on a corner, against the hot building, surveying the busy scene, unnoticed. Mules! Was it not a prophecy,—that drove which sent him into Mr. Carvel's store?

Presently a man with a gnawed yellow mustache and a shifty eye walks out of one of the offices, and perceives our friend.

"Howdy, Mr. Hopper?" says he.

Eliphalet extends a hand to be squeezed and returned. "Got them vouchers?" he asks. He is less careful of his English here.

"Wal, I jest reckon," is the answer: The fellow was interrupted by the appearance of a smart young man in a smart uniform, who wore an air of genteel importance. He could not have been more than two and twenty, and his face and manners were those of a clerk. The tan of field service was lacking on his cheek, and he was black under the eyes.

"Hullo, Ford," he said, jocularly.

"Howdy, Cap," retorted the other. "Wal, suh, that last lot was an extry, fo' sure. As clean a lot as ever I seed. Not a lump on 'em. Gov'ment ain't cheated much on them there at one-eighty a head, I reckon."

Mr. Ford said this with such an air of conviction and such a sober face that the Captain smiled. And at the same time he glanced down nervously at the new line of buttons on his chest.

"I guess I know a mule from a Newfoundland dog by this time," said he.

"Wal, I jest reckon," asserted Mr. Ford, with a loud laugh. "Cap'n Wentworth, allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Hopper. Mr. Hopper, Cap'n Wentworth."

The Captain squeezed Mr. Hoppers hand with fervor. "You interested in mules, Mr. Hopper?" asked the military man.

"I don't cal'late to be," said. Mr. Hopper. Let us hope that our worthy has not been presented as being wholly without a sense of humor. He grinned as he looked upon this lamb in the uniform of Mars, and added, "I'm just naturally patriotic, I guess. Cap'n, 'll you have a drink?"

"And a segar," added Mr. Ford.

"Just one," says the Captain. "It's d—d tiresome lookin' at mules all day in the sun."



Well for Mr. Davitt that his mission work does not extend to Bremen, that the good man's charity keeps him at the improvised hospital down town. Mr. Hopper has resigned the superintendency of his Sunday School, it is true, but he is still a pillar of the church.

The young officer leans against the bar, and listens to stories by Mr. Ford, which it behooves no church members to hear. He smokes Mr. Hopper's cigar and drinks his whiskey. And Eliphalet understands that the good Lord put some fools into the world in order to give the smart people a chance to practise their talents. Mr. Hopper neither drinks nor smokes, but he uses the spittoon with more freedom in this atmosphere.

When at length the Captain has marched out, with a conscious but manly air, Mr. Hopper turns to Ford— "Don't lose no time in presenting them vouchers at headquarters," says he. "Money is worth something now. And there's grumbling about this Department in the Eastern papers, If we have an investigation, we'll whistle. How much to-day?"



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“Three thousand,” says Mr. Ford. He tosses off a pony of Bourbon, but his face is not a delight to look upon, “Hopper, you’ll be a d—d rich man some day.”

“I cal’late to.”

“I do the dirty work. And because I ain’t got no capital, I only get four per cent.”

“Don’t one-twenty a day suit you?”

“You get blasted near a thousand. And you’ve got horse contracts, and blanket contracts besides. I know you. What’s to prevent my goin’ south when the vouchers is cashed?” he cried. “Ain’t it possible?”

“I presume likely,” said Mr. Hopper, quietly. “Then your mother’ll have to move out of her little place.”

CHAPTER II

NEWS FROM CLARENCE

The epithet aristocrat may become odious and fatal on the banks of the Mississippi as it was on the banks of the Seine. Let no man deceive himself! These are fearful times. Thousands of our population, by the sudden stoppage of business, are thrown out of employment. When gaunt famine intrudes upon their household, it is but natural that they should inquire the cause. Hunger began the French Revolution.

Virginia did not read this editorial, because it appeared in that abhorred organ of the Mudsills, the ‘Missouri Democrat.’ The wheels of fortune were turning rapidly that first hot summer of the war time. Let us be thankful that our flesh and blood are incapable of the fury of the guillotine. But when we think calmly of those days, can we escape without a little pity for the aristocrats? Do you think that many of them did not know hunger and want long before that cruel war was over?

How bravely they met the grim spectre which crept so insidiously into their homes!

“Virginia, child,” said Mrs. Colfax, peevishly, one morning as they sat at breakfast, “why do you persist it wearing that old gown? It has gotten on my nerves, my dear. You really must have something new made, even if there are no men here to dress for.”

“Aunt Lillian, you must not say such things. I do not think that I ever dressed to please men.”

“Tut, tut; my dear, we all do. I did, even after married your uncle. It is natural. We must not go shabby in such times as these, or be out of fashion, Did you know that Prince



Napoleon was actually coming here for a visit this autumn? We must be ready for him. I am having a fitting at Miss Elder's to-day."

Virginia was learning patience. She did not reply as she poured out her aunt's coffee.

"Jinny," said that lady, "come with me to Elder's, and I will give you some gowns. If Comyn had been as careful of his own money as of mine, you could dress decently."

"I think I do dress decently, Aunt Lillian," answered the girl. "I do not need the gowns. Give me the money you intend to pay for them, and I can use it for a better purpose."

Mrs. Colfax arranged her lace pettishly.



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"I am sick and tired of this superiority, Jinny." And in the same breath. "What would you do with it?"

Virginia lowered her voice. "Hodges goes through the lines to-morrow night. I should send it to Clarence." "But you have no idea where Clarence is."

"Hodges can find him."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed her aunt, "I would not trust him. How do you know that he will get through the Dutch pickets to Price's army? Wasn't Souther captured last week, and that rash letter of Puss Russell's to Jack Brinsmade published in the Democrat?" She laughed at the recollection, and Virginia was fain to laugh too. "Puss hasn't been around much since. I hope that will cure her of saying what she thinks of people."

"It won't," said Virginia.

"I'll save my money until Price drives the Yankees from the state, and Clarence marches into the city at the head of a regiment," Mrs. Colfax went on, "It won't be long now."

Virginia's eyes flashed.

"Oh, you can't have read the papers. And don't you remember the letter Maude had from George? They need the bare necessities of life, Aunt Lillian. And half of Price's men have no arms at all."

"Jackson," said Mrs. Colfax, "bring me a newspaper. Is there any news to-day?"

"No," answered Virginia, quickly. "All we know is that Lyon has left Springfield to meet our troops, and that a great battle is coming, Perhaps—perhaps it is being fought to-day."

Mrs. Colfax burst into tears, "Oh, Jinny," she cried, "how can you be so cruel!"

That very evening a man, tall and lean, but with the shrewd and kindly eye of a scout, came into the sitting-room with the Colonel and handed a letter to Mrs. Colfax. In the hall he slipped into Virginia's hand another, in a "Jefferson Davis" envelope, and she thrust it in her gown—the girl was on fire as he whispered in her ear that he had seen Clarence, and that he was well. In two days an answer might be left at Mr. Russell's house. But she must be careful what she wrote, as the Yankee scouts were active.

Clarence, indeed, had proven himself a man. Glory and uniform became him well, but danger and deprivation better. The words he had written, careless and frank and boyish, made Virginia's heart leap with pride. Mrs. Colfax's letter began with the adventure below the Arsenal, when the frail skiff had sunk near the island, He told how he had heard the captain of his escort sing out to him in the darkness, and how he had



floated down the current instead, until, chilled and weary, he had contrived to seize the branches of a huge tree floating by. And how by a miracle the moon had risen. When the great Memphis packet bore down upon him, he had, been seen from her guards, and rescued and made much of; and set ashore at the next landing, for fear her captain would get into trouble. In the morning he had walked into the country, first providing himself with butternuts and rawhide boots and a bowie-knife. Virginia would never have recognized her dashing captain of dragoons in this guise.



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The letter was long for Clarence, and written under great difficulties from date to date. For nearly a month he had tramped over mountains and across river bottoms, waiting for news of an organized force of resistance in Missouri. Begging his way from cabin to cabin, and living on greasy bacon and corn pone, at length he crossed the swift Gasconade (so named by the French settlers because of its brawling ways) where the bridge of the Pacific railroad had been blown up by the Governor's orders. Then he learned that the untiring Lyon had steamed up the Missouri and had taken possession of Jefferson City without a blow, and that the ragged rebel force had fought and lost at Booneville. Footsore, but undaunted, he pushed on to join the army, which he heard was retreating southward along the western tier of counties of the state.

On the banks of the Osage he fell in with two other young men in as bad a plight as himself. They travelled together, until one day some rough farmers with shotguns leaped out of a bunch of willows on the borders of a creek and arrested all three for Union spies. And they laughed when Mr. Clarence tried to explain that he had not long since been the dapper captain of the State Dragoons.

His Excellency, the Governor of Missouri (so acknowledged by all good Southerners), likewise laughed when Mr. Colfax and the two others were brought before him. His Excellency sat in a cabin surrounded by a camp which had caused the dogs of war to howl for very shame.

"Colfax!" cried the Governor. "A Colfax of St. Louis in butternuts and rawhide boots?"

"Give me a razor," demanded Clarence, with indignation, "a razor and a suit of clothes, and I will prove it." The Governor laughed once more.

"A razor, young man! A suit of clothes You know not what you ask."

"Are there any gentlemen from St. Louis here?" George Catherwood was brought in,—or rather what had once been George. Now he was a big frontiersman with a huge blond beard, and a bowie, knife stuck into his trousers in place of a sword. He recognized his young captain of dragoons the Governor apologized, and Clarence slept that night in the cabin. The next day he was given a horse, and a bright new rifle which the Governor's soldiers had taken from the Dutch at Cole Camp on the way south, And presently they made a junction with three thousand more who were their images. This was Price's army, but Price had gone ahead into Kansas to beg the great McCulloch and his Confederates to come to their aid and save the state.

"Dear mother, I wish that you and Jinny and Uncle Comyn could have seen this country rabble. How you would have laughed, and cried, because we are just like them. In the combined army two thousand have only bowie-knives or clubs. Some have long rifles of Daniel Boone's time, not fired for thirty years. And the impedimenta are a sight. Open wagons and conestogas and



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carryalls and buggies, and even barouches, weighted down with frying-pans and chairs and feather beds. But we've got spirit, and we can whip Lyon's Dutchmen and Yankees just as we are. Spirit is what counts, and the Yankees haven't got it, I was made to-day a Captain of Cavalry under Colonel Rives. I ride a great, raw-boned horse like an elephant. He jolts me until I am sore,—not quite as easy as my thoroughbred, Jefferson. Tell Jinny to care for him, and have him ready when we march into St. Louis.”

“*Cowskinprairie*, 9th July.

“We have whipped Sigel on the prairie by Coon Creek and killed—we don't know how many. Tell Maude that George distinguished himself in the fight. We cavalry did not get a chance.

“We have at last met McCulloch and his real soldiers. We cheered until we cried when we saw their ranks of gray, with the gold buttons and the gold braid and the gold stars. General McCulloch has taken me on his staff, and promised me a uniform. But how to clothe and feed and arm our men! We have only a few poor cattle, and no money. But our men don't complain. We shall whip the Yankees before we starve.”

For many days Mrs. Colfax did not cease to bewail the hardship which her dear boy was forced to endure. He, who was used to linen sheets and eider down, was without rough blanket or shelter; who was used to the best table in the state, was reduced to husks.

“But, Aunt Lillian,” cried Virginia, “he is fighting for the South. If he were fed and clothed like the Yankees, we should not be half so proud of him.”

Why set down for colder gaze the burning words that Clarence wrote to Virginia. How she pored over that letter, and folded it so that even the candle-droppings would not be creased and fall away! He was happy, though wretched because he could not see her. It was the life he had longed for. At last (and most pathetic!) he was proving his usefulness in this world. He was no longer the mere idler whom she had chidden.

“Jinny, do you remember saying so many years ago that our ruin would come of our not being able to work? How I wish you could see us felling trees to make bullet-moulds, and forging slugs for canister, and making cartridges at night with our bayonets as candlesticks. Jinny dear, I know that you will keep up your courage. I can see you sewing for us, I can hear you praying for us.”

It was, in truth, how Virginia learned to sew. She had always detested it. Her fingers were pricked and sore weeks after she began. Sad to relate, her bandages, shirts, and havelocks never reached the front, —those havelocks, to withstand the heat of the tropic sun, which were made in thousands by devoted Union women that first summer of the war, to be ridiculed as nightcaps by the soldiers.

“Why should not our soldiers have them, too?” said Virginia to the Russell girls. They were never so happy as when sewing on them against the arrival of the Army of Liberation, which never came.



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The long, long days of heat dragged slowly, with little to cheer those families separated from their dear ones by a great army. Clarence might die, and a month—perhaps a year—pass without news, unless he were brought a prisoner to St. Louis. How Virginia envied Maude because the Union lists of dead and wounded would give her tidings of her brother Tom, at least! How she coveted the many Union families, whose sons and brothers were at the front, this privilege!

We were speaking of the French Revolution, when, as Balzac remarked, to be a spy was to be a patriot. Heads are not so cheap in our Anglo-Saxon countries; passions not so fierce and uncontrollable. Compare, with a prominent historian, our Boston Massacre and St. Bartholomew.

They are both massacres. Compare Camp Jackson, or Baltimore, where a few people were shot, with some Paris street scenes after the Bastille. Feelings in each instance never ran higher. Our own provost marshal was hissed in the street, and called “Robespierre,” and yet he did not fear the assassin’s knife. Our own Southern aristocrats were hemmed in in a Union city (their own city). No women were thrown into prison, it is true. Yet one was not permitted to shout for Jeff Davis on the street corner before the provost’s guard. Once in a while a detachment of the Home Guards, commanded by a lieutenant; would march swiftly into a street and stop before a house, whose occupants would run to the rear, only to encounter another detachment in the alley.

One day, in great excitement, Eugenie Renault rang the bell of the Carvel house, and ran past the astounded Jackson up the stairs to Virginia’s room, the door of which she burst open.

“Oh, Jinny!” she cried, “Puss Russell’s house is surrounded by Yankees, and Puss and Emily and all the family are prisoners!”

“Prisoners! What for?” said Virginia, dropping in her excitement her last year’s bonnet, which she was trimming with red, white, and red.

“Because,” said Eugenie, sputtering with indignation “because they waved at some of our poor fellows who were being taken to the slave pen. They were being marched past Mr. Russell’s house under guard—Puss had a small—”

“Confederate flag,” put in Virginia, smiling in spite of herself.

“And she waved it between the shutters,” Eugenie continued. And some one told, the provost marshal. He has had the house surrounded, and the family have to stay there.”

“But if the food gives out?”



“Then,” said Miss Renault, in a voice of awe, “then each one of the family is to have just a common army ration. They are to be treated as prisoners.”

“Oh, those Yankees are detestable!” exclaimed Virginia. “But they shall pay for it. As soon as our army is organized and equipped, they shall pay for it ten times over.” She tried on the bonnet, conspicuous with its red and white ribbons, before the glass. Then she ran to the closet and drew forth the white gown with its red trimmings. “Wait for me, Genie,” she said, “and we’ll go down to Puss’s house together. It may cheer her to see us.”



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“But not in that dress,” said Eugenie, aghast. “They will arrest you.” “Oh, how I wish they would!” cried Virginia. And her eyes flashed so that Eugenie was frightened. “How I wish they would!”

Miss Renault regarded her friend with something of adoration from beneath her black lashes. It was about five in the afternoon when they started out together under Virginia’s white parasol, Eugenie’s slimmer courage upheld by her friend’s bearing. We must remember that Virginia was young, and that her feelings were akin to those our great-grandmothers experienced when the British held New York. It was as if she had been born to wear the red and white of the South. Elderly gentlemen of Northern persuasion paused in their homeward walk to smile in admiration, —some sadly, as Mr. Brinsmade. Young gentlemen found an excuse to retrace their steps a block or two. But Virginia walked on air, and saw nothing. She was between fierce anger and exaltation. She did not deign to drop her eyes as low as the citizen sergeant and guard in front of Puss Russell’s house (these men were only human, after all); she did not so much as glance at the curious people standing on the corner, who could not resist a murmur of delight. The citizen sergeant only smiled, and made no move to arrest the young lady in red and white. Nor did Puss fling open the blinds and wave at her.

“I suppose its because Mr. Russell won’t let her,” said Virginia, disconsolately, “Genie, let’s go to headquarters, and show this Yankee General Fremont that we are not afraid of him.”

Eugenie’s breath was taken away by the very boldness of this proposition.. She looked up timidly into Virginia’s face, and hero-worship got the better of prudence.

The house which General Fremont appropriated for his use when he came back from Europe to assume command in the West was not a modest one. It still stands, a large mansion of brick with a stone front, very tall and very wide, with an elaborate cornice and plate-glass windows, both tall and broad, and a high basement. Two stately stone porches capped by elaborate iron railings adorn it in front and on the side. The chimneys are generous and proportional. In short, the house is of that type built by many wealthy gentlemen in the middle of the century, which has best stood the test of time,—the only type which, if repeated to-day, would not clash with the architectural education which we are receiving. A spacious yard well above the pavement surrounds it, sustained by a wall of dressed stones, capped by an iron fence. The whole expressed wealth, security, solidity, conservatism. Alas, that the coal deposits under the black mud of our Western states should, at length, have driven the owners of these houses out of them! They are now blackened, almost buried in soot; empty, or half-tenanted by boarders, Descendants of the old families pass them on their way to business or to the theatre with a sigh. The sons of those who owned them have built westward, and west-ward again, until now they are six miles from the river.



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On that summer evening forty years ago, when Virginia and Eugenie came in sight of the house, a scene of great animation was before them. Talk was rife over the commanding general's pomp and circumstance. He had just returned from Europe, where pomp and circumstance and the military were wedded. Foreign officers should come to America to teach our army dress and manners. A dashing Hungarian commanded the general's body-guard, which honorable corps was even then drawn up in the street before the house, surrounded at a respectable distance by a crowd that feared to jest. They felt like it save when they caught the stern military eye of the Hungarian captain. Virginia gazed at the glittering uniforms, resplendent in the sun, and at the sleek and well-fed horses, and scalding tears came as she thought of the half-starved rabble of Southern patriots on the burning prairies. Just then a sharp command escaped in broken English from the Hungarian. The people in the yard of the mansion parted, and the General himself walked proudly out of the gate to the curb, where his charger was pawing the gutter. As he put foot to the stirrup, the eye of the great man (once candidate, and again to be, for President) caught the glint of red and white on the corner. For an instant he stood transfixed to the spot, with one leg in the air. Then he took it down again and spoke to a young officer of his staff, who smiled and began to walk toward them. Little Eugenie's knees trembled. She seized Virginia's arm, and whispered in agony.

"Oh, Jinny, you are to be arrested, after all. Oh, I wish you hadn't been so bold!"

"Hush," said Virginia, as she prepared to slay the young officer with a look. She felt like flying at his throat, and choking him for the insolence of that smile. How dare he march undaunted to within six paces of those eyes? The crowd drew back, But did Miss Carvel retreat? Not a step. "Oh, I hope he will arrest me," she said passionately, to Eugenie. "He will start a conflagration beyond the power of any Yankee to quell."

But hush! he was speaking. "You are my prisoners"? No, those were not the words, surely. The lieutenant had taken off his cap. He bowed very low and said:

"Ladies, the General's compliments, and he begs that this much of the sidewalk may be kept clear for a few moments."

What was left for them, after that, save a retreat? But he was not precipitate. Miss Virginia crossed the street with a dignity and bearing which drew even the eyes of the body-guard to one side. And there she stood haughtily until the guard and the General had thundered away. A crowd of black-coated civilians, and quartermasters and other officers in uniform, poured out of the basement of the house into the yards. One civilian, a youngish man a little inclined to stoutness, stopped at the gate, stared, then thrust some papers in his pocket and hurried down the side street. Three blocks thence he appeared abreast of Miss Carvel. More remarkable still, he lifted his hat clear of his head. Virginia drew back. Mr. Hopper, with his newly acquired equanimity and poise, startled her.



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“May I have the pleasure,” said that gentleman, “of accompanying you home?”

Eugenie giggled, Virginia was more annoyed than she showed.

“You must not come out of your way,” she said. Then she added. “I am sure you must go back to the store. It is only six o’clock.”

Had Virginia but known, this occasional tartness in her speech gave Eliphalet an infinite delight, even while it hurt him. His was a nature which liked to gloat over a goal on the horizon He cared not a whit for sweet girls; they cloyed. But a real lady was something to attain. He had revised his vocabulary for just such an occasion, and thrown out some of the vernacular.

“Business is not so pressing nowadays, Miss Carvel,” he answered, with a shade of meaning.

“Then existence must be rather heavy for you,” she said. She made no attempt to introduce him to Eugenie. “If we should have any more victories like Bull Run, prosperity will come back with a rush,” said the son of Massachusetts. “Southern Confederacy, with Missouri one of its stars an industrial development of the South—fortunes in cotton”

Virginia turned quickly, “Oh, how dare you?” she cried. “How dare you speak flippantly of such things?” His suavity was far from overthrown.

“Flippantly Miss Carvel?” said he. “I assure you that I want to see the South win.” What he did not know was that words seldom convince women. But he added something which reduced her incredulity for the time. “Do you cal’late,” said he,—that I could work for your father, and wish ruin to his country?”

“But you are a Yankee born,” she exclaimed.

“There be a few sane Yankees,” replied Mr. Hopper, dryly. A remark which made Eugenie laugh outright, and Virginia could not refrain from a smile.

But much against her will he walked home with her. She was indignant by the time she reached Locust Street. He had never dared do such a thing before, What had got into the man? Was it because he had become a manager, and governed the business during her father’s frequent absences? No matter what Mr. Hopper’s politics, he would always be to her a low-born Yankee, a person wholly unworthy of notice.

At the corner of Olive Street, a young man walking with long strides almost bumped into them. He paused looked back, and bowed as if uncertain of an acknowledgment. Virginia barely returned his bow. He had been very close to her, and she had had time to notice that his coat was threadbare. When she looked again, he had covered half the



block. Why should she care if Stephen Brice had seen her in company with Mr. Hopper? Eliphalet, too, had seen Stephen, and this had added zest to his enjoyment. It was part of the fruits of his reward. He wished in that short walk that he might meet Mr. Cluyme and Belle, and every man and woman and child in the city whom he knew. From time to time he glanced at the severe profile of the aristocrat beside him (he had to look up a bit, likewise), and that look set him down among the beasts of prey. For she was his rightful prey, and he meant not to lose one tittle of enjoyment in the progress of the game. Many and many a night in the bare little back room at Miss Crane's, Eliphalet had gloated over the very event which was now come to pass. Not a step of the way but what he had lived through before.

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The future is laid open to such men as he. Since he had first seen the black cloud of war rolling up from the South, a hundred times had he rehearsed the scene with Colonel Carvel which had actually taken place a week before. A hundred times had he prepared his speech and manner for this first appearance in public with Virginia after he had forced the right to walk in her company. The words he had prepared—commonplace, to be sure, but carefully chosen—flowed from his lips in a continual nasal stream. The girl answered absently, her feminine instinct groping after a reason for it all. She brightened when she saw her father at the doors and, saying good by to Eugenie, tripped up the steps, bowing to Eliphalet coldly.

“Why, bless us, Jinny,” said the Colonel, “you haven’t been parading the town in that costume! You’ll have us in Lynch’s slave pen by to-morrow night. My land!” laughed he, patting her under the chin, “there’s no doubt about your sentiments, anyhow.”

“I’ve been over to Puss Russell’s house,” said she, breathless. “They’ve closed it up, you know—” (He nodded.) “And then we went—Eugenie and I, to headquarters, just to see what the Yankees would do.”

The Colonel’s smile faded. He looked grave. “You must take care, honey,” he said, lowering his voice. “They suspect me now of communicating with the Governor and McCulloch. Jinny, it’s all very well to be brave, and to stand by your colors. But this sort of thing,” said he, stroking the gown, “this sort of thing doesn’t help the South, my dear, and only sets spies upon us. Ned tells me that there was a man in plain clothes standing in the alley last night for three hours.”

“Pa,” cried the girl, “I’m so sorry.” Suddenly searching his face with a swift instinct, she perceived that these months had made it yellow and lined. “Pa, dear, you must come to Glencoe to-morrow and rest You must not go off on any more trips.”

The Colonel shook his head sadly.

“It isn’t the trips, Jinny There are duties, my dear, pleasant duties —Jinny—”

“Yes?”

The Colonel’s eye had suddenly fallen on Mr, Hopper, who was still standing at the bottom of the steps. He checked himself abruptly as Eliphalet pulled off his hat,

“Howdy, Colonel?” he said.

Virginia was motionless, with her back to the intruder, She was frozen by a presentiment. As she saw her father start down the steps, she yearned to throw herself in front of him—to warn him of something; she knew not what. Then she heard the Colonel’s voice, courteous and kindly as ever. And yet it broke a little as he greeted his visitor.



“Won’t—won’t you come in, Mr. Hopper?”

Virginia started

“I don’t know but what I will, thank you, Colonel,” he answered; easily. “I took the liberty of walking home with your daughter.”



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Virginia fairly flew into the house and up the stairs. Gaining her room, she shut the door and turned the key, as though he might pursue her there. The man's face had all at once become a terror. She threw herself on the lounge and buried her face in her hands, and she saw it still leering at her with a new confidence. Presently she grew calmer; rising, she put on the plainest of her scanty wardrobe, and went down the stairs, all in a strange trepidation new to her. She had never been in fear of a man before. She hearkened over the banisters for his voice, heard it, and summoned all her courage. How cowardly she had been to leave her father alone with him.

Eliphalet stayed to tea. It mattered little to him that Mrs. Colfax ignored him as completely as if his chair had been vacant. He glanced at that lady once, and smiled, for he was tasting the sweets of victory. It was Virginia who entertained him, and even the Colonel never guessed what it cost her. Eliphalet himself marvelled at her change of manner, and gloated over that likewise. Not a turn or a quiver of the victim's pain is missed by your beast of prey. The Colonel was gravely polite, but preoccupied. Had he wished it, he could not have been rude to a guest. He offered Mr. Hopper a cigar with the same air that he would have given it to a governor.

"Thank'ee, Colonel, I don't smoke," he said, waving the bog away.

Mrs. Colfax flung herself out of the room.

It was ten o'clock when Eliphalet reached Miss Crane's, and picked his way up the front steps where the boarders were gathered.

"The war doesn't seem to make any difference in your business, Mr. Hopper," his landlady remarked, "where have you been so late?"

"I happened round at Colonel Carvel's this afternoon, and stayed for tea with 'em," he answered, striving to speak casually.

Miss Crane lingered in Mrs. Abner Reed's room later than usual that night.

CHAPTER III

THE SCOURGE OF WAR

"Virginia," said Mrs. Colfax, the next morning on coming downstairs, "I am going back to Bellegarde today. I really cannot put up with such a person as Comyn had here to tea last night."

"Very well, Aunt Lillian. At what time shall I order the carriage?"



The lady was surprised. It is safe to say that she had never accurately gauged the force which Virginia's respect for her elders, and affection for her aunt through Clarence, held in check. Only a moment since Mrs. Colfax had beheld her niece. Now there had arisen in front of her a tall person of authority, before whom she deferred instinctively. It was not what Virginia said, for she would not stoop to tirade. Mrs. Colfax sank into a chair, seeing only the blurred lines of a newspaper the girl had thrust into her hand.

"What—what is it?" she gasped. "I cannot read."

"There has been a battle at Wilson's Creek," said Virginia, in an emotionless voice. "General Lyon is killed, for which I suppose we should be thankful. More than seven hundred of the wounded are on their way here. They are bringing them one hundred and twenty miles, from Springfield to Rollo, in rough army wagons, with scarcely anything to eat or drink."



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“And—Clarence?”

“His name is not there.”

“Thank God!” exclaimed Mrs. Colfax. “Are the Yankees beaten?”

“Yes,” said Virginia, coldly. “At what time shall I order the carriage to take you to Bellegarde?”

Mrs. Colfax leaned forward and caught the hem of her niece’s gown. “Oh, let me stay,” she cried, “let me stay. Clarence may be with them.”

Virginia looked down at her without pity.

“As you please, Aunt Lillian,” she answered. “You know that you may always stay here. I only beg of you one thing, that when you have anything to complain of, you will bring it to me, and not mention it before Pa. He has enough to worry him.”

“Oh, Jinny,” sobbed the lady, in tears again, “how can you be so cruel at such a time, when my nerves are all in pieces?”

But she did not lift her voice at dinner, which was very poor indeed for Colonel Carvel’s house. All day long Virginia, assisted by Uncle Ben and Aunt Easter, toiled in the stifling kitchen, preparing dainties which she had long denied herself. At evening she went to the station at Fourteenth Street with her father, and stood amongst the people, pressed back by the soldiers, until the trains came in. Alas, the heavy basket which the Colonel carried on his arm was brought home again. The first hundred to arrive, ten hours in a hot car without food or water, were laid groaning on the bottom of great furniture vans, and carted to the new House of Refuge Hospital, two miles to the south of the city.

The next day many good women went there, Rebel and Union alike, to have their hearts wrung. The new and cheap building standing in the hot sun reeked with white wash and paint. The miserable men lay on the hard floor, still in the matted clothes they had worn in battle. Those were the first days of the war, when the wages of our passions first came to appal us. Many of the wounds had not been tended since they were dressed on the field weeks before.

Mrs. Colfax went too, with the Colonel and her niece, although she declared repeatedly that she could not go through with such an ordeal. She spoke the truth, for Mr. Carvel had to assist her to the waiting-room. Then he went back to the improvised wards to find Virginia busy over a gaunt Arkansan of Price’s army, whose pitiful, fever-glazed eyes were following her every motion. His frontiersman’s clothes, stained with blackened blood, hung limp over his wasted body. At Virginia’s bidding the Colonel ran downstairs for a bucket of fresh water, and she washed the caked dust from his face and hands. It was Mr. Brinsmade who got the surgeon to dress the man’s wound, and



to prescribe some of the broth from Virginia's basket. For the first time since the war began something of happiness entered her breast.

It was Mr. Brinsmade who was everywhere that day, answering the questions of distracted mothers and fathers and sisters who thronged the place; consulting with the surgeons; helping the few who knew how to work in placing mattresses under the worst cases; or again he might have been seen seated on the bare floor with a pad on his knee, taking down the names of dear ones in distant states,—that he might spend his night writing to them.



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They put a mattress under the Arkansan. Virginia did not leave him until he had fallen asleep, and a smile of peace was come upon his sunken face. Dismayed at the fearful sights about her, awed by the groans that rose on every side, she was choosing her way swiftly down the room to join her father and aunt in the carriage below.

The panic of flight had seized her. She felt that another little while in this heated, horrible place would drive her mad. She was almost at the door when she came suddenly upon a sight that made her pause.

An elderly lady in widow's black was kneeling beside a man groaning in mortal agony, fanning away the flies already gathering about his face. He wore the uniform of a Union sergeant,—dusty and splotched and torn. A small Testament was clasped convulsively in the fingers of his right hand. The left sleeve was empty. Virginia lingered, whelmed in pity, thrilled by a wonderful womanliness of her who knelt there. Her face the girl had not even seen, for it was bent over the man. The sweetness of her voice held Virginia as in a spell, and the sergeant stopped groaning that he might listen:

“You have a wife?”

“Yes, ma'am.”

“And a child?”

The answer came so painfully.

“A boy, ma'am—born the week—before I came—away.”

“I shall write to your wife,” said the lady, so gently that Virginia could scarce hear, “and tell her that you are cared for. Where does she live?”

He gave the address faintly—some little town in Minnesota. Then he added, “God bless you, lady.”

Just then the chief surgeon came and stood over them. The lady turned her face up to him, and tears sparkled in her eyes. Virginia felt them wet in her own. Her worship was not given to many. Nobility, character, efficiency,—all were written on that face. Nobility spoke in the large features, in the generous mouth, in the calm, gray eyes. Virginia had seen her often before, but not until now was the woman revealed to her.

“Doctor, could this man's life be saved if I took him to my home?”

The surgeon got down beside her and took the man's pulse. The eyes closed. For a while the doctor knelt there, shaking his head. “He has fainted,” he said.



“Do you think he can be saved?” asked the lady again. The surgeon smiled,—such a smile as a good man gives after eighteen hours of amputating, of bandaging, of advising,—work which requires a firm hand, a clear eye and brain, and a good heart.

“My dear Mrs. Brice,” he said, “I shall be glad to get you permission to take him, but we must first make him worth the taking. Another hour would have been too late.” He glanced hurriedly about the busy room, and then added, “We must have one more to help us.”

Just then some one touched Virginia’s arm. It was her father.

“I am afraid we must go, dear,” he said, “your aunt is getting impatient.”



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“Won’t you please go without me, Pa?” she asked. “Perhaps I can be of some use.”

The Colonel cast a wondering glance at the limp uniform, and went away. The surgeon, who knew the Carvel family, gave Virginia a look of astonishment. It was Mrs. Brice’s searching gaze that brought the color to the girl’s face.

“Thank you, my dear,” she said simply.

As soon as he could get his sister-in-law off to Locust Street in the carriage, Colonel Carvel came back. For two reeking hours he stood against the newly plastered wall. Even he was surprised at the fortitude and skill Virginia showed from the very first, when she had deftly cut away the stiffened blue cloth, and helped to take off the rough bandages. At length the fearful operation was finished, and the weary surgeon, gathering up his box, expressed with all the energy left to him, his thanks to the two ladies.

Virginia stood up, faint and dizzy. The work of her hands had sustained her while it lasted, but now the ordeal was come. She went down the stairs on her father’s arm, and out into the air. All at once she knew that Mrs. Brice was beside her, and had taken her by the hand.

“My dear?” she was saying, “God will reward you for this act. You have taught many of us to-day a lesson we should have learned in our Bibles.”

Virginia trembled with many emotions, but she answered nothing. The mere presence of this woman had a strange effect upon the girl,—she was filled with a longing unutterable. It was not because Margaret Brice was the mother of him whose life had been so strangely blended with hers —whom she saw in her dreams. And yet now some of Stephen’s traits seemed to come to her understanding, as by a revelation. Virginia had labored through the heat of the day by Margaret Brice’s side doing His work, which levels all feuds and makes all women sisters. One brief second had been needful for the spell.

The Colonel bowed with that courtesy and respect which distinguished him, and Mrs. Brice left them to go back into the room of torment, and watch by the sergeant’s pallet. Virginia’s eyes followed her up the stairs, and then she and her father walked slowly to the carriage. With her foot on the step Virginia paused.

“Pa,” she said, “do you think it would be possible to get them to let us take that Arkansan into our house?”

“Why, honey, I’ll ask Brinsmade if you like,” said the Colonel. “Here he comes now, and Anne.”

It was Virginia who put the question to him.



“My dear,” replied that gentleman, patting her, “I would do anything in the world for you. I’ll see General Fremont this very afternoon. Virginia,” he added, soberly, “it is such acts as yours to-day that give us courage to live in these times.”

Anne kissed her friend.



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“Oh, Jinny, I saw what you were doing for one of our men. What am I saying?” she cried. “They are your men, too. This horrible war cannot last. It cannot last. It was well that Virginia did not see the smile on the face of the commanding general when Mr. Brinsmade at length got to him with her request. This was before the days when the wounded arrived by the thousands, when the zeal of the Southern ladies threatened to throw out of gear the workings of a great system. But the General, had had his eye on Mr. Carvel from the first. Therefore he smiled.

“Colonel Carvel,” said Mr. Brinsmade, with dignity, “is a gentleman. When he gives his word, it is sacred, sir.”

“Even to an enemy,” the General put in, “By George, Brinsmade, unless I knew you, I should think that you were half rebel yourself. Well, well, he may have his Arkansan.”

Mr. Brinsmade, when he conveyed the news to the Carvel house, did not say that he had wasted a precious afternoon in the attempt to interview his Excellency, the Commander in-chief. It was like obtaining an audience with the Sultan or the Czar. Citizens who had been prominent in affairs for twenty years, philanthropists and patriotic-spirited men like Mr. Brinsmade, the mayor, and all the ex-mayors mopped their brows in one of the general’s anterooms of the big mansion, and wrangled with beardless youths in bright uniforms who were part of the chain. The General might have been a Richelieu, a Marlborough. His European notions of uniformed inaccessibility he carried out to the letter. He was a royal personage, seldom seen, who went abroad in the midst of a glittering guard. It did not seem to weigh with his Excellency that these simple and democratic gentlemen would not put up with this sort of thing. That they who had saved the city to the Union were more or less in communication with a simple and democratic President; that in all their lives they had never been in the habit of sitting idly for two hours to mop their brows.

On the other hand, once you got beyond the gold lace and the etiquette, you discovered a good man and a patriot. It was far from being the General’s fault that Mr. Hopper and others made money in mules and worthless army blankets. Such things always have been, and always will be unavoidable when this great country of ours rises from the deep sleep of security into which her sons have lulled her, to demand her sword. We shall never be able to realize that the maintenance of a standing army of comfortable size will save millions in the end. So much for Democracy when it becomes a catchword.

The General was a good man, had he done nothing else than encourage the Western Sanitary Commission, that glorious army of drilled men and women who gave up all to relieve the suffering which the war was causing. Would that a novel—a great novel—might be written setting forth with truth its doings. The hero of it could be Calvin Brinsmade, and a nobler hero than he was never under a man’s hand. For the glory of generals fades beside his glory.



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It was Mr. Brinsmade's carriage that brought Mrs. Brice home from her trying day in the hospital. Stephen, just returned from drill at Verandah hall, met her at the door. She would not listen to his entreaties to rest, but in the evening, as usual, took her sewing to the porch behind the house, where there was a little breeze.

"Such a singular thing happened to-day, Stephen," she said. "It was while we were trying to save the life of a poor sergeant who had lost his arm. I hope we shall be allowed to have him here. He is suffering horribly."

"What happened, mother?" he asked.

"It was soon after I had come upon this poor fellow," she said. "I saw the—the flies around him. And as I got down beside him to fan them away I had such a queer sensation. I knew that some one was standing behind me, looking at me. Then Dr. Allergy came, and I asked him about the man, and he said there was a chance of saving him if we could only get help. Then some one spoke up,—such a sweet voice. It was that Miss Carvel my dear, with whom you had such a strange experience when you bought Hester, and to whose party you once went. Do you remember that they offered us their house in Glencoe when the Judge was so ill?"

"Yes," said Stephen.

"She is a wonderful creature," his mother continued. "Such personality, such life! And wasn't it a remarkable offer for a Southern woman to make? They feel so bitterly, and—and I do not blame them." The good lady put down on her lap the night-shirt she was making. "I saw how it happened. The girl was carried away by her pity. And, my dear, her capability astonished me. One might have thought that she had always been a nurse. The experience was a dreadful one for me—what must it have been for her. After the operation was over, I followed her downstairs to where she was standing with her father in front of the building, waiting for their carriage. I felt that I must say something to her, for in all my life I have never seen a nobler thing done. When I saw her there, I scarcely knew what to say. Words seemed so inadequate. It was then three o'clock, and she had been working steadily in that place since morning. I am sure she could not have borne it much longer. Sheer courage carried her through it, I know, for her hand trembled so when I took it, and she was very pale. She usually has color, I believe. Her father, the Colonel, was with her, and he bowed to me with such politeness. He had stood against the wall all the while we had worked, and he brought a mattress for us. I have heard that his house is watched, and that they have him under suspicion for communicating with the Confederate leaders." Mrs. Brice sighed. He seems such a fine character. I hope they will not get into any trouble."

"I hope not, mother," said Stephen.



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It was two mornings later that Judge Whipple and Stephen drove to the Iron Mountain depot, where they found a German company of Home Guards drawn up. On the long wooden platform under the sheds Stephen caught sight of Herr Korner and Herr Hauptmann amid a group of their countrymen. Little Korner came forward to clasp his hands. The tears ran on his cheeks, and he could not speak for emotion. Judge Whipple, grim and silent, stood apart. But he uncovered his head with the others when the train rolled in. Reverently they entered a car where the pine boxes were piled one on another, and they bore out the earthly remains of Captain Carl Richter.

Far from the land of his birth, among those same oaks on Bloody Hill where brave Lyon fell, he had gladly given up his life for the new country and the new cause he had made his own.

That afternoon in the cemetery, as the smoke of the last salute to a hero hung in the flickering light and drifted upward through the great trees, as the still air was yet quivering with the notes of the bugle-call which is the soldiers requiem, a tall figure, gaunt and bent, stepped out from behind the blue line of the troops. It was that of Judge Whipple. He carried in his hand a wreath of white roses—the first of many to be laid on Richter's grave.

Poor Richter! How sad his life had been! And yet he had not filled it with sadness. For many a month, and many a year, Stephen could not look upon his empty place without a pang. He missed the cheery songs and the earnest presence even more than he had thought. Carl Richter,—as his father before him,—had lived for others. Both had sacrificed their bodies for a cause. One of them might be pictured as he trudged with Father Jahn from door to door through the Rhine country, or shouldering at sixteen a heavy musket in the Landwehr's ranks to drive the tyrant Napoleon from the beloved Fatherland. Later, aged before his time, his wife dead of misery, decrepit and prison-worn in the service of a thankless country, his hopes lived again in Carl, the swordsman of Jena. Then came the pitiful Revolution, the sundering of all ties, the elder man left to drag out his few weary days before a shattered altar. In Carl a new aspiration had sprung up, a new patriotism stirred. His, too, had been the sacrifice. Happy in death, for he had helped perpetuate that great Union which should be for all time the refuge of the oppressed.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIST OF SIXTY

One chilling day in November, when an icy rain was falling on the black mud of the streets, Virginia looked out of the window. Her eye was caught by two horses which were just skeletons with the skin stretched over them. One had a bad sore on his flank, and was lame. They were pulling a rattle-trap farm wagon with a buckled wheel. On



the seat a man, pallid and bent and scantily clad, was holding the reins in his feeble hands, while beside him covered



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a child of ten wrapped in a ragged blanket. In the body of the wagon, lying on a mattress pressed down in the midst of broken, cheap furniture and filthy kitchen ware, lay a gaunt woman in the rain. Her eyes were closed, and a hump on the surface of the dirty quilt beside her showed that a child must be there. From such a picture the girl fled in tears. But the sight of it, and of others like it, haunted her for weeks. Through those last dreary days of November, wretched families, which a year since had been in health and prosperity, came to the city, beggars, with the wrecks of their homes. The history of that hideous pilgrimage across a state has never been written. Still they came by the hundred, those families. Some brought little corpses to be buried. The father of one, hale and strong when they started, died of pneumonia in the public lodging-house. The walls of that house could tell many tales to wring the heart. So could Mr. Brinsmade, did he choose to speak of his own charities. He found time, between his labors at the big hospital newly founded, and his correspondence, and his journeys of love,—between early morning and midnight,—to give some hours a day to the refugees.

Throughout December they poured in on the afflicted city, already overtaxed. All the way to Springfield the road was lined with remains of articles once dear—a child's doll, a little rocking-chair, a colored print that has hung in the best room, a Bible text.

Anne Brinsmade, driven by Nicodemus, went from house to house to solicit old clothes, and take them to the crowded place of detention. Christmas was drawing near—a sorry Christmas, in truth. And many of the wanderers were unclothed and unfed.

More battles had been fought; factions had arisen among Union men. Another general had come to St. Louis to take charge of the Department, and the other with his wondrous body-guard was gone.

The most serious problem confronting the new general—was how to care for the refugees. A council of citizens was called at headquarters, and the verdict went forth in the never-to-be-forgotten Orders No. 24.

“Inasmuch,” said the General, “as the Secession army had driven these people from their homes, Secession sympathizers should be made to support them.” He added that the city was unquestionably full of these.

Indignation was rife the day that order was published. Sixty prominent “disloyalists” were to be chosen and assessed to make up a sum of ten thousand dollars.

“They may sell my house over my head before I will pay a cent,” cried Mr. Russell. And he meant it. This was the way the others felt. Who were to be on this mysterious list of “Sixty”? That was the all-absorbing question of the town. It was an easy matter to pick the conspicuous ones. Colonel Carvel was sure to be there, and Mr. Catherwood and

Mr. Russell and Mr. James, and Mr. Worington the lawyer. Mrs. Addison Colfax lived for days in

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a fermented state of excitement which she declared would break her down; and which, despite her many cares and worries, gave her niece not a little amusement. For Virginia was human, and one morning she went to her aunt's room to read this editorial from the newspaper:— "For the relief of many palpitating hearts it may be well to state that we understand only two ladies are on the ten thousand dollar list."

"Jinny," she cried, "how can you be so cruel as to read me that, when you know that I am in a state of frenzy now? How does that relieve me? It makes it an absolute certainty that Madame Jules and I will have to pay. We are the only women of importance in the city."

That afternoon she made good her much-uttered threat, and drove to Bellegarde. Only the Colonel and Virginia and Mammy Easter and Ned were left in the big house. Rosetta and Uncle Ben and Jackson had been hired out, and the horses sold,—all save old Dick, who was running, long-haired, in the fields at Glencoe.

Christmas eve was a steel-gray day, and the sleet froze as it fell. Since morning Colonel Carvel had sat poking the sitting-room fire, or pacing the floor restlessly. His occupation was gone. He was observed night and day by Federal detectives. Virginia strove to amuse him, to conceal her anxiety as she watched him. Well she knew that but for her he would long since have fled southward, and often in the bitterness of the night-time she blamed herself for not telling him to go. Ten years had seemed to pass over him since the war had begun.

All day long she had been striving to put away from her the memory of Christmas eves past and gone of her father's early home-coming from the store, a mysterious smile on his face; of Captain Lige stamping noisily into the house, exchanging uproarious jests with Ned and Jackson. The Captain had always carried under his arm a shapeless bundle which he would confide to Ned with a knowing wink. And then the house would be lighted from top to bottom, and Mr. Russell and Mr. Catherwood and Mr. Brinsmade came in for a long evening with Mr. Carvel over great bowls of apple toddy and egg-nog. And Virginia would have her own friends in the big parlor. That parlor was shut up now, and icy cold.

Then there was Judge Whipple, the joyous event of whose year was his Christmas dinner at Colonel Carvel's house. Virginia pictured him this year at Mrs. Brice's little table, and wondered whether he would miss them as much as they missed him. War may break friendships, but it cannot take away the sacredness of memories.

The sombre daylight was drawing to an early close as the two stood looking out of the sitting-room window. A man's figure muffled in a greatcoat slanting carefully across the



street caught their eyes. Virginia started. It was the same United States deputy marshal she had seen the day before at Mr. Russell's house.

"Pa," she cried, "do you think he is coming here?"



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"I reckon so, honey."

"The brute! Are you going to pay?"

"No, Jinny."

"Then they will take away the furniture."

"I reckon they will."

"Pa, you must promise me to take down the mahogany bed in your room. It—it was mother's. I could not bear to see them take that. Let me put it in the garret."

The Colonel was distressed, but he spoke without a tremor.

"No, Jinny. We must leave this house just as it is." Then he added, strangely enough for him, "God's will be done."

The bell rang sharply. And Ned, who was cook and housemaid, came in with his apron on.

"Does you want to see folks, Marse Comyn?"

The Colonel rose, and went to the door himself. He was an imposing figure as he stood in the windy vestibule, confronting the deputy. Virginia's first impulse was to shrink under the stairs. Then she came out and stood beside her father.

"Are you Colonel Carvel?"

"I reckon I am. Will you come in?"

The officer took off his cap. He was a young man with a smooth face, and a frank brown eye which paid its tribute to Virginia. He did not appear to relish the duty thrust upon him. He fumbled in his coat and drew from his inner pocket a paper.

"Colonel Carvel," said he, "by order of Major General Halleck, I serve you with this notice to pay the sum of three hundred and fifty dollars for the benefit of the destitute families which the Rebels have driven from their homes. In default of payment within a reasonable time such personal articles will be seized and sold at public auction as will satisfy the demand against you."

The Colonel took the paper. "Very well, sir," he said. "You may tell the General that the articles may be seized. That I will not, while in my right mind, be forced to support persons who have no claim upon me."



It was said in the tone in which he might have refused an invitation to dinner. The deputy marvelled. He had gone into many houses that week; had seen indignation, hysterics, frenzy. He had even heard men and women whose sons and brothers were in the army of secession proclaim their loyalty to the Union. But this dignity, and the quiet scorn of the girl who had stood silent beside them, were new. He bowed, and casting his eyes to the vestibule, was glad to escape from the house.

The Colonel shut the door. Then he turned toward Virginia, thoughtfully pulled his goatee, and laughed gently. "Lordy, we haven't got three hundred and fifty dollars to our names," said he.

The climate of St. Louis is capricious. That fierce valley of the Missouri, which belches fitful blizzards from December to March, is sometimes quiet. Then the hot winds come up from the Gulf, and sleet melts, and windows are opened. In those days the streets will be fetlock deep in soft mud. It is neither summer, nor winter, nor spring, nor anything.

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It was such a languorous afternoon in January that a furniture van, accompanied by certain nondescript persons known as United States Police, pulled up at the curb in front of Mr. Carvel's house. Eugenie, watching at the window across the street, ran to tell her father, who came out on his steps and reviled the van with all the fluency of his French ancestors.

Mammy Easter opened the door, and then stood with her arms akimbo, amply filling its place. Her lips protruded, and an expression of defiance hard to describe sat on her honest black face.

"Is this Colonel Carvel's house?"

"Yassir. I 'low you knows dat jes as well as me." An embarrassed silence, and then from Mammy, "Whaffor you laffin at?"

"Is the Colonel at home?"

"Now I reckon you knows dat he ain't. Ef he was, you ain't come here 'quirin' in dat honey voice." (Raising her own voice.) "You tink I dunno whaffor you come? You done come heah to rifle, an' to loot, an' to steal, an' to seize what ain't your'n. You come heah when young Marse ain't to home ter rob him." (Still louder.) "Ned, whaffor you hidin' yonder? Ef yo' ain't man to protect Marse Comyn's prop-ty, jes han' over Marse Comyn's gun."

The marshal and his men had stood, half amused, more than half baffled by this unexpected resistance. Mammy Easter looked so dangerous that it was evident she was not to be passed without extreme bodily discomfort.

"Is your mistress here?"

This question was unfortunate in the extreme.

"You—you white trash!" cried Mammy, bursting with indignation. "Who is you to come heah 'quiring fo' her! I ain't agwine—"

"Mammy!"

"Yas'm! Yas, Miss Jinny." Mammy backed out of the door and clutched at her bandanna.

"Mammy, what is all this noise about?" The torrent was loosed once more.

"These heah men, Miss Jinny, was gwine f'r t' carry away all yo' pa's blongin's. I jes' tol' 'em dey ain't comin' in ovah dis heah body."



The deputy had his foot on the threshold. He caught sight of the face of Miss Carvel within, and stopped abruptly.

“I have a warrant here from the Provost Marshal, ma’am, to seize personal property to satisfy a claim against Colonel Carvel.”

Virginia took the order, read it, and handed it back. “I do not see how I am to prevent you,” she said. The deputy was plainly abashed.

“I’m sorry, Miss. I—I can’t tell you how sorry I am. But it’s got to be done.”

Virginia nodded coldly. And still the man hesitated. “What are you waiting for?” she said.

The deputy wiped his muddy feet. He made his men do likewise. Then he entered the chill drawing-room, threw open the blinds and glanced around him.

“I expect all that we want is right here,” he said. And at the sight of the great chandelier, with its cut-glass crystals, he whistled. Then he walked over to the big English Rothfield piano and lifted the lid.



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The man was a musician. Involuntarily he rested himself on the mahogany stool, and ran his fingers over the keys. They seemed to Virginia, standing motionless in the ball, to give out the very chords of agony.

The piano, too, had been her mother's. It had once stood in the brick house of her grandfather Colfax at Halcyondale. The songs of Beatrice lay on the bottom shelf of the what-not near by. No more, of an evening when they were alone, would Virginia quietly take them out and play them over to the Colonel, as he sat dreaming in the window with his cigar, —dreaming of a field on the borders of a wood, of a young girl who held his hand, and sang them softly to herself as she walked by his side. And, when they reached the house in the October twilight, she had played them for him on this piano. Often he had told Virginia of those days, and walked with her over those paths.

The deputy closed the lid, and sent out to the van for a truck. Virginia stirred. For the first time she heard the words of Mammy Easter.

“Come along upstairs wid yo’ Mammy, honey. Dis ain’t no place for us, I reckon.” Her words were the essence of endearment. And yet, while she pronounced them, she glared unceasingly at the intruders. “Oh, de good Lawd’ll burn de wicked!”

The men were removing the carved legs. Virginia went back into the room and stood before the deputy.

“Isn’t there something else you could take? Some jewellery?” She flushed. “I have a necklace—”

“No, miss. This warrant’s on your father. And there ain’t nothing quite so salable as pianos.”

She watched them, dry-eyed, as they carried it away. It seemed like a coffin. Only Mammy Easter guessed at the pain in Virginia’s breast, and that was because there was a pain in her own. They took the rosewood what-not, but Virginia snatched the songs before the men could touch them, and held them in her arms. They seized the mahogany velvet-bottomed chairs, her uncle’s wedding present to her mother; and, last of all, they ruthlessly tore up the Brussels carpet, beginning near the spot where Clarence had spilled ice-cream at one of her children’s parties.

She could not bear to look into the dismantled room when they had gone. It was the embodied wreck of her happiness. Ned closed the blinds once more, and she herself turned the key in the lock, and went slowly up the stairs.

CHAPTER V

THE AUCTION



“Stephen,” said the Judge, in his abrupt way, “there isn’t a great deal doing. Let’s go over to the Secesh property sales.”

Stephen looked up in surprise. The seizures and intended sale of secession property had stirred up immense bitterness and indignation in the city. There were Unionists (lukewarm) who denounced the measure as unjust and brutal. The feelings of Southerners, avowed and secret, may only be surmised. Rigid ostracism was to be the price of bidding on any goods displayed, and men who bought in handsome furniture on that day because it was cheap have still, after forty years, cause to remember it.



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It was not that Stephen feared ostracism. Anne Brinsmade was almost the only girl left to him from among his former circle of acquaintances. Miss Carvel's conduct is known. The Misses Russell showed him very plainly that they disapproved of his politics. The hospitable days at that house were over. Miss Catherwood, when they met on the street, pretended not to see him, and Eugenie Renault gave him but a timid nod. The loyal families to whose houses he now went were mostly Southerners, in sentiment against forced auctions.

However, he put on his coat, and sallied forth into the sharp air, the Judge leaning on his arm. They walked for some distance in silence.

"Stephen," said he, presently, "I guess I'll do a little bidding."

Stephen did not reply. But he was astonished. He wondered what Mr. Whipple wanted with fine furniture. And, if he really wished to bid, Stephen knew likewise that no consideration would stop him.

"You don't approve of this proceeding, sir, I suppose," said the Judge.

"Yes, sir, on large grounds. War makes many harsh things necessary."

"Then," said the Judge, tartly, "by bidding, we help to support starving Union families. You should not be afraid to bid, sir."

Stephen bit his lip. Sometimes Mr. Whipple made him very angry.

"I am not afraid to bid, Judge Whipple." He did not see the smile on the Judge's face.

"Then you will bid in certain things for me," said Mr. Whipple. Here he hesitated, and shook free the rest of the sentence with a wrench. "Colonel Carvel always had a lot of stuff I wanted. Now I've got the chance to buy it cheap."

There was silence again, for the space of a whole block. Finally, Stephen managed to say:—"You'll have to excuse me, sir. I do not care to do that."

"What?" cried the Judge, stopping in the middle of a cross-street, so that a wagon nearly ran over his toes.

"I was once a guest in Colonel Carvel's house, sir. And—"

"And what?"

Neither the young man nor the old knew all it was costing the other to say these things. The Judge took a grim pleasure in eating his heart. And as for Stephen, he often went to his office through Locust Street, which was out of his way, in the hope that he might



catch a glimpse of Virginia. He had guessed much of the privations she had gone through. He knew that the Colonel had hired out most of his slaves, and he had actually seen the United States Police drive across Eleventh Street with the piano that she had played on.

The Judge was laughing quietly,—not a pleasant laugh to hear,—as they came to Morgan's great warerooms. A crowd blocked the pavement, and hustled and shoved at the doors,—roughs, and soldiers off duty, and ladies and gentlemen whom the Judge and Stephen knew, and some of whom they spoke to. All of these were come out of curiosity, that they might see for themselves any who had the



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temerity to bid on a neighbor's household goods. The long hall, which ran from street to street, was packed, the people surging backward and forward, and falling roughly against the mahogany pieces; and apologizing, and scolding, and swearing all in a breath. The Judge, holding tightly to Stephen, pushed his way fiercely to the stand, vowing over and over that the commotion was a secession trick to spoil the furniture and stampede the sale. In truth, it was at the Judge's suggestion that a blue provost's guard was called in later to protect the seized property.

How many of those mahogany pieces, so ruthlessly tumbled about before the public eye, meant a heartache! Wedding presents of long ago, dear to many a bride with silvered hair, had been torn from the corner where the children had played—children who now, alas, were grown and gone to war. Yes, that was the Brussels rug that had lain before the fire, and which the little feet had worn in the corner. Those were the chairs the little hands had harnessed, four in a row, and fallen on its side was the armchair—the stage coach itself. There were the books, held up to common gaze, that a beloved parent had thumbed with affection. Yes, and here in another part of the hall were the family horses and the family carriage that had gone so often back and forth from church with the happy brood of children, now scattered and gone to war.

As Stephen reached his place beside the Judge, Mr. James's effects were being cried. And, if glances could have killed, many a bidder would have dropped dead. The heavy dining-room table which meant so much to the family went for a song to a young man recently come from Yankeeland, whose open boast it was—like Eliphalet's secret one—that he would one day grow rich enough to snap his fingers in the face of the Southern aristocrats. Mr. James was not there. But Mr. Catherwood, his face haggard and drawn, watched the sideboard he had given his wife on her silver wedding being sold to a pawnbroker.

Stephen looked in vain for Colonel Carvel—for Virginia. He did not want to see them there. He knew by heart the list of things which had been taken from their house. He understood the feeling which had sent the Judge here to bid them in. And Stephen honored him the more.

When the auctioneer came to the Carvel list, and the well-known name was shouted out, the crowd responded with a stir and pressed closer to the stand. And murmurs were plainly heard in more than one direction.

"Now, gentlemen, and ladies," said the seller, "this here is a genuine English Rothfield piano once belonging to Colonel Carvel, and the celebrated Judge Colfax of Kaintucky." He lingered fondly over the names, that the impression might have time to sink deep. "This here magnificent instrument's worth at the very least" (another pause) "twelve hundred dollars. What am I bid?"



He struck a base note of the keys, then a treble, and they vibrated in the heated air of the big hall. Had he hit the little C of the top octave, the tinkle of that also might have been heard.



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“Gentlemen and ladies, we have to begin somewhere. What am I bid?”

A menacing murmur gave place to the accusing silence. Some there were who gazed at the Rothfield with longing eyes, but who had no intention of committing social suicide. Suddenly a voice, the rasp of which penetrated to St. Charles Street, came out with a bid. The owner was a seedy man with a straw-colored, drunkard's mustache. He was leaning against the body of Mrs. Russell's barouche (seized for sale), and those about him shrank away as from smallpox. His hundred-dollar offer was followed by a hiss. What followed next Stephen will always remember. When Judge Whipple drew himself up to his full six feet, that was a warning to those that knew him. As he doubled the bid, the words came out with the aggressive distinctness of a man who through a long life has been used to opposition. He with the gnawed yellow mustache pushed himself clear of the barouche, his smouldering cigar butt dropping to the floor. But there were no hisses now.

And this is how Judge Whipple braved public opinion once more. As he stood there, defiant, many were the conjectures as to what he could wish to do with the piano of his old friend. Those who knew the Judge (and there were few who did not) pictured to themselves the dingy little apartment where he lived, and smiled. Whatever his detractors might have said of him, no one was ever heard to avow that he had bought or sold anything for gain.

A tremor ran through the people. Could it have been of admiration for the fine old man who towered there glaring defiance at those about him? “Give me a strong and consistent enemy,” some great personage has said, “rather than a lukewarm friend.” Three score and five years the Judge had lived, and now some were beginning to suspect that he had a heart. Verily he had guarded his secret well. But it was let out to many more that day, and they went home praising him who had once pronounced his name with bitterness.

This is what happened. Before he of the yellow mustache could pick up his cigar from the floor and make another bid, the Judge had cried out a sum which was the total of Colonel Carvel's assessment. Many recall to this day how fiercely he frowned when the applause broke forth of itself; and when he turned to go they made a path for him, in admiration, the length of the hall, down which he stalked, looking neither to the right nor left. Stephen followed him, thankful for the day which had brought him into the service of such a man.

And so it came about that the other articles were returned to Colonel Carvel with the marshal's compliments, and put back into the cold parlor where they had stood for many years. The men who brought them offered to put down the carpet, but by Virginia's orders the rolls were stood up in the corner, and the floor left bare. And days passed into weeks, and no sign or message came from Judge Whipple in regard to the piano he had bought. Virginia did not dare mention it to the Colonel.



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Where was it? It had been carried by six sweating negroes up the narrow stairs into the Judge's office. Stephen and Shadrach had by Mr. Whipple's orders cleared a corner of his inner office and bedroom of papers and books and rubbish, and there the bulky instrument was finally set up. It occupied one-third of the space. The Judge watched the proceeding grimly, choking now and again from the dust that was raised, yet uttering never a word. He locked the lid when the van man handed him the key, and thrust that in his pocket.

Stephen had of late found enough to do in St. Louis. He was the kind of man to whom promotions came unsought, and without noise. In the autumn he had been made a captain in the Halleck Guards of the State Militia, as a reward for his indefatigable work in the armories and his knowledge of tactics. Twice his company had been called out at night, and once they made a campaign as far as the Merimec and captured a party of recruits who were destined for Jefferson Davis. Some weeks passed before Mr. Brinsmade heard of his promotion and this exploit, and yet scarcely a day went by that he did not see the young man at the big hospital. For Stephen helped in the work of the Sanitary Commission too, and so strove to make up in zeal for the service in the field which he longed to give.

After Christmas Mr. and Mrs. Brinsmade moved out to their place on the Bellefontaine Road. This was to force Anne to take a rest. For the girl was worn out with watching at the hospitals, and with tending the destitute mothers and children from the ranks of the refugees. The Brinsmade place was not far from the Fair Grounds,—now a receiving camp for the crude but eager regiments of the Northern states. To Mr. Brinsmade's, when the day's duty was done, the young Union officers used to ride, and often there would be half a dozen of them to tea. That house, and other great houses on the Bellefontaine Road with which this history has no occasion to deal, were as homes to many a poor fellow who would never see home again. Sometimes Anne would gather together such young ladies of her acquaintance from the neighbor hood and the city as their interests and sympathies permitted to waltz with a Union officer, and there would be a little dance. To these dances Stephen Brice was usually invited.

One such occasion occurred on a Friday in January, and Mr. Brinsmade himself called in his buggy and drove Stephen to the country early in the afternoon. He and Anne went for a walk along the river, the surface of which was broken by lumps of yellow ice. Gray clouds hung low in the sky as they picked their way over the frozen furrows of the ploughed fields. The grass was all a yellow-brown, but the north wind which swayed the bare trees brought a touch of color to Anne's cheeks. Before they realized where they were, they had nearly crossed the Bellegarde estate, and the house itself was come into view, standing high on the slope above the withered garden. They halted.



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"The shutters are up," said Stephen. "I understood that Mrs. Colfax had come out here not long a—"

"She came out for a day just before Christina," said Anne, smiling, "and then she ran off to Kentucky. I think she was afraid that she was one of the two women on the list of Sixty."

"It must have been a blow to her pride when she found that she was not," said Stephen, who had a keen remembrance of her conduct upon a certain Sunday not a year gone.

Impelled by the same inclination, they walked in silence to the house and sat down on the edge of the porch. The only motion in the view was the smoke from the slave quarters twisting in the wind, and the hurrying ice in the stream.

"Poor Jinny!" said Anne, with a sigh, "how she loved to romp! What good times we used to have here together!"

"Do you think that she is unhappy?" Stephen demanded, involuntarily.

"Oh, yes," said Anne. "How can you ask? But you could not make her show it. The other morning when she came out to our house I found her sitting at the piano. I am sure there were tears in her eyes, but she would not let me see them. She made some joke about Spencer Catherwood running away. What do you think the Judge will do with that piano, Stephen?"

He shook his head.

"The day after they put it in his room he came in with a great black cloth, which he spread over it. You cannot even see the feet."

There was a silence. And Anne, turning to him timidly, gave him a long, searching look.

"It is growing late," she said. "I think that we ought to go back."

They went out by the long entrance road, through the naked woods. Stephen said little. Only a little while before he had had one of those vivid dreams of Virginia which left their impression, but not their substance, to haunt him. On those rare days following the dreams her spirit had its mastery over his. He pictured her then with a glow on her face which was neither sadness nor mirth,—a glow that ministered to him alone. And yet, he did not dare to think that he might have won her, even if politics and war had not divided them.

When the merriment of the dance was at its height that evening, Stephen stood at the door of the long room, meditatively watching the bright gowns and the flash of gold on the uniforms as they flitted past. Presently the opposite door opened, and he heard Mr.



Brinsmade's voice mingling with another, the excitable energy of which recalled some familiar episode. Almost—so it seemed—at one motion, the owner of the voice had come out of the door and had seized Stephen's hand in a warm grasp,—a tall and spare figure in the dress of a senior officer. The military frock, which fitted the man's character rather than the man, was carelessly open, laying bare a gold-buttoned white waistcoat and an expanse of shirt bosom which ended in a black stock tie. The ends of the collar were apart the width of the red clipped beard, and the mustache was cropped straight along the line of the upper lip. The forehead rose high, and was brushed carelessly free of the hair. The nose was almost straight, but combative. A fire fairly burned in the eyes.



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"The boy doesn't remember me," said the gentleman, in quick tones, smiling at Mr. Brinsmade.

"Yes, sir, I do," Stephen made haste to answer. He glanced at the star on the shoulder strap, and said. "You are General Sherman."

"First rate!" laughed the General, patting him. "First rate!"

"Now in command at Camp Benton, Stephen," Mr. Brinsmade put in. "Won't you sit down, General?"

"No," said the General, emphatically waving away the chair. "No, rather stand." Then his keen face suddenly lighted with amusement,—and mischief, Stephen thought. "So you've heard of me since we met, sir?" "Yes, General."

"Humph! Guess you heard I was crazy," said the General, in his downright way.

Stephen was struck dumb.

"He's been reading the lies in the newspapers too, Brinsmade," the General went on rapidly. "I'll make 'em eat their newspapers for saying I was crazy. That's the Secretary of War's doings. Ever tell you what Cameron did, Brinsmade? He and his party were in Louisville last fall, when I was serving in Kentucky, and came to my room in the Galt House. Well, we locked the door, and Miller sent us up a good lunch and wine, After lunch, the Secretary lay on my bed, and we talked things over. He asked me what I thought about things in Kentucky. I told him. I got a map. I said, 'Now, Mr. Secretary, here is the whole Union line from the Potomac to Kansas. Here's McClellan in the East with one hundred miles of front. Here's Fremont in the West with one hundred miles. Here we are in Kentucky, in the centre, with three hundred miles to defend. McClellan has a hundred thousand men, Fremont has sixty thousand. You give us fellows with over three hundred miles only eighteen thousand.' 'How many do you want?' says Cameron, still on the bed. 'Two hundred thousand before we get through,' said I. Cameron pitched up his hands in the air. 'Great God?' says he, 'where are they to come from?' 'The northwest is chuck full of regiments you fellows at Washington won't accept,' said I. 'Mark my words, Mr. Secretary, you'll need 'em all and more before we get done with this Rebellion.' Well, sir, he was very friendly before we finished, and I thought the thing was all thrashed out. No, sir! he goes back to Washington and gives it out that I'm crazy, and want two hundred thousand men in Kentucky. Then I am ordered to report to Halleck in Missouri here, and he calls me back from Sedalia because he believes the lies."

Stephen, who had in truth read the stories in question a month or two before, could not conceal his embarrassment He looked at the man in front of him,—alert, masterful



intelligent, frank to any stranger who took his fancy,—and wondered how any one who had talked to him could believe them.

Mr. Brinsmade smiled. “They have to print something, General,” he said.



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"I'll give 'em something to print later on," answered the General, grimly. Then his expression changed. "Brinsmade, you fellows did have a session with Fremont, didn't you? Anderson sent me over here last September, and the first man I ran across at the Planters' House was Appleton. '—What are you in town for?' says he. 'To see Fremont,' I said. You ought to have heard Appleton laugh. 'You don't think Fremont'll see you, do you?' says he. 'Why not?' 'Well,' says Tom, 'go 'round to his palace at six to-morrow morning and bribe that Hungarian prince who runs his body-guard to get you a good place in the line of senators and governors and first citizens, and before nightfall you may get a sight of him, since you come from Anderson. Not one man in a hundred,' says Appleton, 'I not one man in a hundred, reaches his chief-of-staff.' Next morning," the General continued in a staccato which was often his habit, "had breakfast before daybreak and went 'round there. Place just swarming with Californians—army contracts." (The General sniffed.) Saw Fremont. Went back to hotel. More Californians, and by gad—old Baron Steinberger with his nose hanging over the register."

"Fremont was a little difficult to get at, General," said Mr. Brinsmade. "Things were confused and discouraged when those first contracts were awarded. Fremont was a good man, and it wasn't his fault that the inexperience of his quartermasters permitted some of those men to get rich."

"No," said the General. "His fault! Certainly not. Good man! To be sure he was—didn't get along with Blair. These court-martials you're having here now have stirred up the whole country. I guess we'll hear now how those fortunes were made. To listen to those witnesses lie about each other on the stand is better than the theatre."

Stephen laughed at the comical and vivid manner in which the General set this matter forth. He himself had been present one day of the sittings of the court-martial when one of the witnesses on the prices of mules was that same seedy man with the straw-colored mustache who had bid for Virginia's piano against the Judge.

"Come, Stephen," said the General, abruptly, "run and snatch one of those pretty girls from my officers. They're having more than their share."

"They deserve more, sir," answered Stephen. Whereupon the General laid his hand impulsively on the young man's shoulder, divining what Stephen did not say.

"Nonsense!" said he; "you are doing the work in this war, not we. We do the damage—you repair it. If it were not for Mr. Brinsmade and you gentlemen who help him, where would our Western armies be? Don't you go to the front yet a while, young man. We need the best we have in reserve." He glanced critically at Stephen. "You've had military training of some sort?"

"He's a captain in the Halleck Guards, sir," said Mr. Brinsmade, generously, "and the best drillmaster we've had in this city. He's seen service, too, General."



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Stephen reddened furiously and started to protest, when the General cried:— “It’s more than I have in this war. Come, come, I knew he was a soldier. Let’s see what kind of a strategist he’ll make. Brinsmade, have you got such a thing as a map?” Mr. Brinsmade had, and led the way back into the library. The General shut the door, lighted a cigar with a single vigorous stroke of a match, and began to smoke with quick puffs. Stephen was puzzled how to receive the confidences the General was giving out with such freedom.

When the map was laid on the table, the General drew a pencil from his pocket and pointed to the state of Kentucky. Then he drew a line from Columbus to Bowling Green, through Forts Donelson and Henry.

“Now, Stephen,” said he, “there’s the Rebel line. Show me the proper place to break it.”

Stephen hesitated a while, and then pointed at the centre.

“Good!” said the General. “Very good!” He drew a heavy line across the first, and it ran almost in the bed of the Tennessee River. He swung on Mr. Brinsmade. “Very question Halleck asked me the other day, and that’s how I answered it. Now, gentlemen, there’s a man named Grant down in that part of the country. Keep your eyes on him. Ever heard of him, Brinsmade? He used to live here once, and a year ago he was less than I was. Now he’s a general.”

The recollection of the scene in the street by the Arsenal that May morning not a year gone came to Stephen with a shock.

“I saw him,” he cried; “he was Captain Grant that lived on the Gravois Road. But surely this can’t be the same man who seized Paducah and was in that affair at Belmont.”

“By gum!” said the General, laughing. “Don’t wonder you’re surprised. Grant has stuff in him. They kicked him around Springfield awhile, after the war broke out, for a military carpet-bagger. Then they gave him for a regiment the worst lot of ruffians you ever laid eyes on. He fixed ’em. He made ’em walk the plank. He made ’em march halfway across the state instead of taking the cars the Governor offered. Belmont! I guess he is the man that chased the Rebs out of Belmont. Then his boys broke loose when they got into the town. That wasn’t Grant’s fault. The Rebs came back and chased ’em out into their boats on the river. Brinsmade, you remember hearing about that.

“Grant did the coolest thing you ever saw. He sat on his horse at the top of the bluff while the boys fell over each other trying to get on the boat. Yes, sir, he sat there, disgusted, on his horse, smoking a cigar, with the Rebs raising pandemonium all around him. And then, sir,” cried the General, excitedly, “what do you think he did? Hanged if he didn’t force his horse right on to his haunches, slide down the whole length of the bank and ride him across a teetering plank on to the steamer. And the Rebs just stood



on the bank and stared. They were so astonished they didn't even shoot the man. You watch Grant," said the General. "And now, Stephen," he added, "just you run off and take hold of the prettiest girl you can find. If any of my boys object, say I sent you."



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The next Monday Stephen had a caller. It was little Tiefel, now a first lieutenant with a bristly beard and tanned face, come to town on a few days' furlough. He had been with Lyon at Wilson's Creek, and he had a sad story to tell of how he found poor Richter, lying stark on that bloody field, with a smile of peace upon his face. Strange that he should at length have been killed by a sabre!

It was a sad meeting for those two, since each reminded the other of a dear friend they would see no more on earth. They went out to sup together in the German style; and gradually, over his beer, Tiefel forgot his sorrow. Stephen listened with an ache to the little man's tales of the campaigns he had been through. So that presently Tiefel cried out:

"Why, my friend, you are melancholy as an owl. I will tell you a funny story. Did you ever hear of one General Sherman? He that they say is crazy?"

"He is no more crazy than I am," said Stephen, warmly—

"Is he not?" answered Tiefel, "then I will show you a mistake. You recall last November he was out to Sedalia to inspect the camp there, and he sleeps in a little country store where I am quartered. Now up gets your General Sherman in the middle of the night, —midnight,—and marches up and down between the counters, and waves his arms. So, says he, 'land so,' says he, 'Sterling Price will be here, and Steele here, and this column will take that road, and so-and-so's a damned fool. Is not that crazy? So he walks up and down for three eternal hours. Says he, 'Pope has no business to be at Osterville, and Steele here at Sedalia with his regiments all over the place. They must both go into camp at La Mine River, and form brigades and divisions, that the troops may be handled.'"

"If that's insanity," cried Stephen so strongly as to surprise the little man; "then I wish we had more insane generals. It just shows how a malicious rumor will spread. What Sherman said about Pope's and Steele's forces is true as Gospel, and if you ever took the trouble to look into that situation, Tiefel, you would see it." And Stephen brought down his mug on the table with a crash that made the bystanders jump.

"Himmel!" exclaimed little Tiefel. But he spoke in admiration.

It was not a month after that that Sherman's prophecy of the quiet general who had slid down the bluff at Belmont came true. The whole country bummed with Grant's praises. Moving with great swiftness and secrecy up the Tennessee, in company with the gunboats of Commodore Foote, he had pierced the Confederate line at the very point Sherman had indicated. Fort Henry had fallen, and Grant was even then moving to besiege Donelson.



Mr. Brinsmade prepared to leave at once for the battlefield, taking with him too Paducah physicians and nurses. All day long the boat was loading with sanitary stores and boxes of dainties for the wounded. It was muggy and wet—characteristic of that winter—as Stephen pushed through the drays on the slippery levee to the landing.



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He had with him a basket his mother had put up. He also bore a message to Mr. Brinsmade from the Judge. It was while he was picking his way along the crowded decks that he ran into General Sherman. The General seized him unceremoniously by the shoulder.

“Good-by, Stephen,” he said.

“Good-by, General,” said Stephen, shifting his basket to shake hands. “Are you going away?”

“Ordered to Paducah,” said the General. He pulled Stephen off the guards into an empty cabin. “Brice,” said he, earnestly, “I haven’t forgotten how you saved young Brinsmade at Camp Jackson. They tell me that you are useful here. I say, don’t go in unless you have to. I don’t mean force, you understand. But when you feel that you can go in, come to me or write me a letter. That is,” he added, seemingly inspecting Stephen’s white teeth with approbation, “if you’re not afraid to serve under a crazy man.”

It has been said that the General liked the lack of effusiveness of Stephen’s reply.

CHAPTER VI

ELIPHALET PLAYS HIS TRUMPS

Summer was come again. Through interminable days, the sun beat down upon the city; and at night the tortured bricks flung back angrily the heat with which he had filled them. Great battles had been fought, and vast armies were drawing breath for greater ones to come.

“Jinny,” said the Colonel one day, “as we don’t seem to be much use in town, I reckon we may as well go to Glencoe.”

Virginia, threw her arms around her father’s neck. For many months she had seen what the Colonel himself was slow to comprehend—that his usefulness was gone. The days melted into weeks, and Sterling Price and his army of liberation failed to come. The vigilant Union general and his aides had long since closed all avenues to the South. For, one fine morning toward the end of the previous summer, when the Colonel was contemplating a journey, he had read that none might leave the city without a pass, whereupon he went hurriedly to the office of the Provost Marshal. There he had found a number of gentlemen in the same plight, each waving a pass made out by the Provost Marshal’s clerks, and waiting for that officer’s signature. The Colonel also procured one of these, and fell into line. The Marshal gazed at the crowd, pulled off his coat, and readily put his name to the passes of several gentlemen going east. Next came Mr. Bub Ballington, whom the Colonel knew, but pretended not to.

“Going to Springfield?” asked the Marshal, genially.

“Yes,” said Bub.

“Not very profitable to be a minute-man, eh?” in the same tone.

The Marshal signs his name, Mr, Ballington trying not to look indignant as he makes for the door. A small silver bell rings on the Marshal’s desk, the one word: “Spot!” breaks the intense silence, which is one way of saying that Mr. Ballington is detained, and will probably be lodged that night at Government expense.



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“Well, Colonel Carvel, what can I do for you this morning?” asked the Marshal, genially.

The Colonel pushed back his hat and wiped his brow. “I reckon I’ll wait till next week, Captain,” said Mr. Carvel. “It’s pretty hot to travel just now.”

The Provost Marshal smiled sweetly. There were many in the office who would have liked to laugh, but it did not pay to laugh at some people. Colonel Carvel was one of them.

In the proclamation of martial law was much to make life less endurable than ever. All who were convicted by a court-martial of being rebels were to have property confiscated, and slaves set free. Then there was a certain oath to be taken by all citizens who did not wish to have guardians appointed over their actions. There were many who swallowed this oath and never felt any ill effects. Mr. Jacob Cluyme was one, and came away feeling very virtuous. It was not unusual for Mr. Cluyme to feel virtuous. Mr. Hopper did not have indigestion after taking it, but Colonel Carvel would sooner have eaten, gooseberry pie, which he had never tasted but once.

That summer had worn away, like a monster which turns and gives hot gasps when you think it has expired. It took the Arkansan just a month, under Virginia’s care, to become well enough to be sent to a Northern prison. He was not precisely a Southern gentleman, and he went to sleep over the “Idylls of the King.” But he was admiring, and grateful, and wept when he went off to the boat with the provost’s guard, destined for a Northern prison. Virginia wept too. He had taken her away from her aunt (who would have nothing to do with him), and had given her occupation. She nor her father never tired of hearing his rough tales of Price’s rough army.

His departure was about the time when suspicions were growing set. The favor had caused comment and trouble, hence there was no hope of giving another sufferer the same comfort. The cordon was drawn tighter. One of the mysterious gentlemen who had been seen in the vicinity of Colonel Carvel’s house was arrested on the ferry, but he had contrived to be rid of the carpet-sack in which certain precious letters were carried.

Throughout the winter, Mr. Hopper’s visits to Locust Street had continued at intervals of painful regularity. It is not necessary to dwell upon his brilliant powers of conversation, nor to repeat the platitudes which he repeated, for there was no significance in Mr. Hopper’s tales, not a particle. The Colonel had found that out, and was thankful. His manners were better; his English decidedly better.



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It was for her father's sake, of course, that Virginia bore with him. Such is the appointed lot of women. She tried to be just, and it occurred to her that she had never before been just. Again and again she repeated to herself that Eliphalet's devotion to the Colonel at this low ebb of his fortunes had something in it of which she did not suspect him. She had a class contempt for Mr. Hopper as an uneducated Yankee and a person of commercial ideals. But now he was showing virtues,—if virtues they were,—and she tried to give him the benefit of the doubt. With his great shrewdness and business ability, why did he not take advantage of the many opportunities the war gave to make a fortune? For Virginia had of late been going to the store with the Colonel,—who spent his mornings turning over piles of dusty papers, and Mr. Hopper had always been at his desk.

After this, Virginia even strove to be kind to him, but it was uphill work. The front door never closed after one of his visits that suspicion was not left behind. Antipathy would assert itself. Could it be that there was a motive under all this plotting? He struck her inevitably as the kind who would be content to mine underground to attain an end. The worst she could think of him was that he wished to ingratiate himself now, in the hope that, when the war was ended, he might become a partner in Mr. Carvel's business. She had put even this away as unworthy of her.

Once she had felt compelled to speak to her father on the subject.

"I believe I did him an injustice, Pa," she said. "Not that I like him any better now. I must be honest about that. I simply can't like him. But I do think that if he had been as unscrupulous as I thought, he would have deserted you long ago for something more profitable. He would not be sitting in the office day after day making plans for the business when the war is over."

She remembered how sadly he had smiled at her over the top of his paper.

"You are a good girl, Jinny," he said.

Toward the end of July of that second summer riots broke out in the city, and simultaneously a bright spot appeared on Virginia's horizon. This took the form, for Northerners, of a guerilla scare, and an order was promptly issued for the enrollment of all the able-bodied men in the ten wards as militia, subject to service in the state, to exterminate the roving bands. Whereupon her Britannic Majesty became extremely popular, —even with some who claimed for a birthplace the Emerald Isle. Hundreds who heretofore had valued but lightly their British citizenship made haste to renew their allegiance; and many sought the office of the English Consul whose claims on her Majesty's protection were vague, to say the least. Broken heads and scandal followed. For the first time, when Virginia walked to the store with her father, Eliphalet was not there. It was strange indeed that Virginia defended him.



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"I don't blame him for not wanting to fight for the Yankees," she said.

The Colonel could not resist a retort.

"Then why doesn't he fight for the South he asked"

"Fight for the South!" cried the young lady, scornfully. "Mr. Hopper fight? I reckon the South wouldn't have him."

"I reckon not, too," said the Colonel, dryly.

For the following week curiosity prompted Virginia to take that walk with the Colonel. Mr. Hopper being still absent, she helped him to sort the papers—those grimy reminders of a more prosperous time gone by. Often Mr. Carvel would run across one which seemed to bring some incident to his mind; for he would drop it absently on his desk, his hand seeking his chin, and remain for half an hour lost in thought. Virginia would not disturb him.

Meanwhile there had been inquiries for Mr. Hopper. The Colonel answered them all truthfully—generally with that dangerous suavity for which he was noted. Twice a seedy man with a gnawed yellow mustache had come in to ask Eliphalet's whereabouts. On the second occasion this individual became importunate.

"You don't know nothin' about him, you say?" he demanded.

"No," said the Colonel.

The man took a shuffle forward.

"My name's Ford," he said. "I 'low I kin 'lighten you a little."

"Good day, sir," said the Colonel.

"I guess you'll like to hear what I've got to say."

"Ephum," said Mr. Carvel in his natural voice, "show this man out."

Mr. Ford slunk out without Ephum's assistance. But he half turned at the door, and shot back a look that frightened Virginia.

"Oh, Pa," she cried, in alarm, "what did he mean?"

"I couldn't tell you, Jinny," he answered. But she noticed that he was very thoughtful as they walked home. The next morning Eliphalet had not returned, but a corporal and guard were waiting to search the store for him. The Colonel read the order, and invited



them in with hospitality. He even showed them the way upstairs, and presently Virginia heard them all tramping overhead among the bales. Her eye fell upon the paper they had brought, which lay unfolded on her father's desk. It was signed Stephen A. Brice, Enrolling Officer.

That very afternoon they moved to Glencoe, and Ephum was left in sole charge of the store. At Glencoe, far from the hot city and the cruel war, began a routine of peace. Virginia was a child again, romping in the woods and fields beside her father. The color came back to her cheeks once more, and the laughter into her voice. The two of them, and Ned and Mammy, spent a rollicking hour in the pasture the freedom of which Dick had known so long, before the old horse was caught and brought back into bondage. After that Virginia took long drives with her father, and coming home, they would sit in the summer house high above the Merimec, listening to the crickets' chirp, and watching the day fade upon the water. The Colonel, who had always detested pipes, learned to smoke a corncob. He would sit by the hour, with his feet on the rail of the porch and his hat tilted back, while Virginia read to him. Poe and Wordsworth and Scott he liked, but Tennyson was his favorite. Such happiness could not last.



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One afternoon when Virginia was sitting in the summer house alone, her thoughts wandering back, as they sometimes did, to another afternoon she had spent there,—it seemed so long ago,—when she saw Mammy Easter coming toward her.

“Honey, dey’s comp’ny up to de house. Mister Hopper’s done arrived. He’s on de porch, talkin’ to your Pa. Lawsey, look wha he come!”

In truth, the solid figure of Eliphalet himself was on the path some twenty yards behind her. His hat was in his hand; his hair was plastered down more neatly than ever, and his coat was a faultless and sober creation of a Franklin Avenue tailor. He carried a cane, which was unheard of. Virginia sat upright, and patted her skirts with a gesture of annoyance—what she felt was anger, resentment. Suddenly she rose, swept past Mammy, and met him ten paces from the summer house.

“How-dy-do, Miss Virginia,” he cried pleasantly. “Your father had a notion you might be here.” He said fayther.

Virginia gave him her hand limply. Her greeting would have frozen a man of ardent temperament. But it was not precisely ardor that Eliphalet showed. The girl paused and examined him swiftly. There was something in the man’s air to-day.

“So you were not caught?” she said.

Her words seemed to relieve some tension in him. He laughed noiselessly.

“I just guess I wahn’t.”

“How did you escape?” she asked, looking at him curiously.

“Well, I did, first of all. You’re considerable smart, Miss Jinny, but I’ll bet you can’t tell me where I was, now.”

“I do not care to know. The place might save you again.”

He showed his disappointment. “I cal’lated it might interest you to know how I dodged the Sovereign State of Missouri. General Halleck made an order that released a man from enrolling on payment of ten dollars. I paid. Then I was drafted into the Abe Lincoln Volunteers; I paid a substitute. And so here I be, exercising life, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

“So you bought yourself free?” said Virginia. “If your substitute gets killed, I suppose you will have cause for congratulation.”

Eliphalet laughed, and pulled down his cuffs. “That’s his lookout, I cal’late,” said he. He glanced at the girl in a way that made her vaguely uneasy. She turned from him, back



toward the summer house. Eliphalet's eyes smouldered as they rested upon her figure. He took a step forward.

"Miss Jinny?" he said.

"Yes?"

"I've heard considerable about the beauties of this place. Would you mind showing me 'round a bit?" Virginia started. It was his tone now. Not since that first evening in Locust Street had it taken on such assurance, And yet she could not be impolite to a guest.

"Certainly not," she replied, but without looking up. Eliphalet led the way. He came to the summer house, glanced around it with apparent satisfaction, and put his foot on the moss-grown step. Virginia did a surprising thing. She leaped quickly into the doorway before him, and stood facing him, framed in the climbing roses.



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“Oh, Mr. Hopper!” she cried. “Please, not in here.” He drew back, staring in astonishment at the crimson in her face.

“Why not?” he asked suspiciously—almost brutally. She had been groping wildly for excuses, and found none.

“Because,” she said, “because I ask you not to.” With dignity: “That should be sufficient.”

“Well,” replied Eliphalet, with an abortive laugh, “that’s funny, now. Womenkind get queer notions, which I cal’late we’ve got to respect and put up with all our lives—eh?”

Her anger flared at his leer and at his broad way of gratifying her whim. And she was more incensed than ever at his air of being at home—it was nothing less.

The man’s whole manner was an insult. She strove still to hide her resentment.

“There is a walk along the bluff,” she said, coldly, “where the view is just as good.”

But she purposely drew him into the right-hand path, which led, after a little, back to the house. Despite her pace he pressed forward to her side.

“Miss Jinny,” said he, precipitately, “did I ever strike you as a marrying man?”

Virginia stopped, and put her handkerchief to her face, the impulse strong upon her to laugh. Eliphalet was suddenly transformed again into the common commercial Yankee. He was in love, and had come to ask her advice. She might have known it.

“I never thought of you as of the marrying kind, Mr. Hopper,” she answered, her voice quivering.

Indeed, he was irresistibly funny as he stood hot and ill at ease. The Sunday coat bore witness to his increasing portliness by creasing across from the buttons; his face, fleshy and perspiring, showed purple veins, and the little eyes receded comically, like a pig’s.

“Well, I’ve been thinking serious of late about getting married,” he continued, slashing the rose bushes with his stick. “I don’t cal’late to be a sentimental critter. I’m not much on high-sounding phrases, and such things, but I’d give you my word I’d make a good husband.”

“Please be careful of those roses, Mr. Hopper.”

“Beg pardon,” said Eliphalet. He began to lose track of his tenses—that was the only sign he gave of perturbation. “When I come to St. Louis without a cent, Miss Jinny, I made up my mind I’d be a rich man before I left it. If I was to die now, I’d have kept that



promise. I'm not thirty-four, and I cal'late I've got as much money in a safe place as a good many men you call rich. I'm not saying what I've got, mind you. All in proper time.

"I'm a pretty steady kind. I've stopped chewing—there was a time when I done that. And I don't drink nor smoke."

"That is all very commendable, Mr. Hopper," Virginia said, stifling a rebellious titter. "But,—but why did you give up chewing?"

"I am informed that the ladies are against it," said Eliphalet,—“dead against it. You wouldn't like it in a husband, now, would you?"



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This time the laugh was not to be put down. "I confess I shouldn't," she said.

"Thought so," he replied, as one versed. His tones took on a nasal twang. "Well, as I was saying, I've about got ready to settle down, and I've had my eye on the lady this seven years."

"Marvel of constancy!" said Virginia. "And the lady?"

"The lady," said Eliphalet, bluntly, "is you." He glanced at her bewildered face and went on rapidly: "You pleased me the first day I set eyes on you in the store I said to myself, 'Hopper, there's the one for you to marry.' I'm plain, but my folks was good people. I set to work right then to make a fortune for you, Miss Jinny. You've just what I need. I'm a plain business man with no frills. You'll do the frills. You're the kind that was raised in the lap of luxury. You'll need a man with a fortune, and a big one; you're the sort to show it off. I've got the foundations of that fortune, and the proof of it right here. And I tell you,"—his jaw was set,—“I tell you that some day Eliphalet Hopper will be one of the richest men in the West.”

He had stopped, facing her in the middle of the way, his voice strong, his confidence supreme. At first she had stared at him in dumb wonder. Then, as she began to grasp the meaning of his harangue, astonishment was still dominant,—sheer astonishment. She scarcely listened. But, as he finished, the thatch of the summer house caught her eye. A vision arose of a man beside whom Eliphalet was not worthy to crawl. She thought of Stephen as he had stood that evening in the sunset, and this proposal seemed a degradation. This brute dared to tempt her with money. Scalding words rose to her lips. But she caught the look on Eliphalet's face, and she knew that he would not understand. This was one who rose and fell, who lived and loved and hated and died and was buried by—money.

For a second she looked into his face as one who escapes a pit gazes over the precipice, and shuddered. As for Eliphalet, let it not be thought that he had no passion. This was the moment for which he had lived since the day he had first seen her and been scorned in the store. That type of face, that air,—these were the priceless things he would buy with his money. Crazy with the very violence of his long-pent desire, he seized her hand. She wrung it free again.

"How—how dare you!" she cried.

He staggered back, and stood for a moment motionless, as though stunned. Then, slowly, a light crept into his little eyes which haunted her for many a day.

"You—won't—marry me?" he said.



“Oh, how dare you ask me!” exclaimed Virginia, her face burning with the shame of it. She was standing with her hands behind her, her back against a great walnut trunk, the crusted branches of which hung over the bluff. Even as he looked at her, Eliphalet lost his head, and indiscretion entered his soul.



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“You must!” he said hoarsely. “You must! You’ve got no notion of my money, I say.”

“Oh!” she cried, “can’t you understand? If you owned the whole of California, I would not marry you.” Suddenly he became very cool. He slipped his hand into a pocket, as one used to such a motion, and drew out some papers.

“I cal’late you ain’t got much idea of the situation, Miss Carvel,” he said; “the wheels have been a-turning lately. You’re poor, but I guess you don’t know how poor you are,—eh? The Colonel’s a man of honor, ain’t he?”

For her life she could not have answered,—nor did she even know why she stayed to listen.

“Well,” he said, “after all, there ain’t much use in your lookin’ over them papers. A woman wouldn’t know. I’ll tell you what they say: they say that if I choose, I am Carvel & Company.”

The little eyes receded, and he waited a moment, seemingly to prolong a physical delight in the excitement and suffering of a splendid creature. The girl was breathing fast and deep.

“I cal’late you despise me, don’t you?” he went on, as if that, too, gave him pleasure. “But I tell you the Colonel’s a beggar but for me. Go and ask him if I’m lying. All you’ve got to do is to say you’ll be my wife, and I tear these notes in two. They go over the bluff.” (He made the motion with his hands.) “Carvel & Company’s an old firm,—a respected firm. You wouldn’t care to see it go out of the family, I cal’late.”

He paused again, triumphant. But she did none of the things he expected. She said, simply:—“Will you please follow me, Mr. Hopper.”

And he followed her,—his shrewdness gone, for once.

Save for the rise and fall of her shoulders she seemed calm. The path wound through a jungle of waving sunflowers and led into the shade in front of the house. There was the Colonel sitting on the porch. His pipe lay with its scattered ashes on the boards, and his head was bent forward, as though listening. When he saw the two, he rose expectantly, and went forward to meet them. Virginia stopped before him.

“Pa,” she said, “is it true that you have borrowed money from this man?”

Eliphalet had seen Mr. Carvel angry once, and his soul had quivered. Terror, abject terror, seized him now, so that his knees smote together. As well stare into the sun as into the Colonel’s face. In one stride he had a hand in the collar of Eliphalet’s new coat, the other pointing down the path.



“It takes just a minute to walk to that fence, sir,” he said sternly. “If you are any longer about it, I reckon you’ll never get past it. You’re a cowardly hound, sir!” Mr. Hopper’s gait down the flagstones was an invention of his own. It was neither a walk, nor a trot, nor a run, but a sort of sliding amble, such as is executed in nightmares. Singing in his head was the famous example of the eviction of Babcock from the store, —the only time that the Colonel’s bullet had gone wide. And down in the small of his back Eliphalet listened for the crack of a pistol, and feared that a clean hole might be bored there any minute. Once outside, he took to the white road, leaving a trail of dust behind him that a wagon might have raised. Fear lent him wings, but neglected to lift his feet.



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The Colonel passed his arm around his daughter, and pulled his goatee thoughtfully. And Virginia, glancing shyly upward, saw a smile in the creases about his mouth: She smiled, too, and then the tears hid him from her.

Strange that the face which in anger withered cowards and made men look grave, was capable of such infinite tenderness,—tenderness and sorrow. The Colonel took Virginia in his arms, and she sobbed against his shoulder, as of old.

“Jinny, did he—?”

“Yes—”

“Lige was right, and—and you, Jinny—I should never have trusted him. The sneak!”

Virginia raised her head. The sun was slanting in yellow bars through the branches of the great trees, and a robin’s note rose above the bass chorus of the frogs. In the pauses, as she listened, it seemed as if she could hear the silver sound of the river over the pebbles far below.

“Honey,” said the Colonel,—“I reckon we’re just as poor as white trash.”

Virginia smiled through her tears.

“Honey,” he said again, after a pause, “I must keep my word and let him have the business.”

She did not reproach him.

“There is a little left, a very little,” he continued slowly, painfully. “I thank God that it is yours. It was left you by Becky—by your mother. It is in a railroad company in New York, and safe, Jinny.”

“Oh, Pa, you know that I do not care,” she cried. “It shall be yours and mine together. And we shall live out here and be happy.”

But she glanced anxiously at him nevertheless. He was in his familiar posture of thought, his legs slightly apart, his felt hat pushed back, stroking his goatee. But his clear gray eyes were troubled as they sought hers, and she put her hand to her breast.

“Virginia,” he said, “I fought for my country once, and I reckon I’m some use yet awhile. It isn’t right that I should idle here, while the South needs me, Your Uncle Daniel is fifty-eight, and Colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment.—Jinny, I have to go.”

Virginia said nothing. It was in her blood as well as his. The Colonel had left his young wife, to fight in Mexico; he had come home to lay flowers on her grave. She knew that



he thought of this; and, too, that his heart was rent at leaving her. She put her hands on his shoulders, and he stooped to kiss her trembling lips.

They walked out together to the summer-house, and stood watching the glory of the light on the western hills. "Jinn," said the Colonel, "I reckon you will have to go to your Aunt Lillian. It—it will be hard. But I know that my girl can take care of herself. In case—in case I do not come back, or occasion should arise, find Lige. Let him take you to your Uncle Daniel. He is fond of you, and will be all alone in Calvert House when the war is over. And I reckon that is all I have to say. I won't pry into your heart, honey. If you love Clarence, marry him. I like the boy, and I believe he will quiet down into a good man."

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Virginia did not answer, but reached out for her father's hand and held its fingers locked tight in her own. From the kitchen the sound of Ned's voice rose in the still evening air.

“Sposin' I was to go to N' Orleans an' take sick and die,
Laik a bird into de country ma spirit would fly.”

And after a while down the path the red and yellow of Mammy Easter's bandanna was seen.

“Supper, Miss Jinny. Laws, if I ain't ramshacked de premises fo' you bof. De co'n bread's gittin' cold.”

That evening the Colonel and Virginia thrust a few things into her little leather bag they had chosen together in London. Virginia had found a cigar, which she hid until they went down to the porch, and there she gave it to him; when he lighted the match she saw that his hand shook.

Half an hour later he held her in his arms at the gate, and she heard his firm tread die in the dust of the road. The South had claimed him at last.