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# **THE COURIER OF THE OZARKS**

**THE YOUNG MISSOURIANS SERIES**

**BY BYRON A. DUNN**

**AUTHOR OF "THE YOUNG KENTUCKIANS" SERIES**

**WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS**

**BY H. S. DELAY**

**CHICAGO**

**A. C. McCLURG & CO.**

**1912**

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*To the Loyal Men of Missouri, who as members of the militia did so much to save the State to the Union, this book is dedicated. History gives them scant notice, and the Federal government has failed to reward them as they deserve.*

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**"Follow the colors," he shouted.**

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## PREFACE

During the year 1862, after the capture of Island No. 10 and New Madrid, no large armies operated in Missouri; but the State was the theater of a desperate guerrilla warfare, in which nearly or quite a hundred thousand men took part. It was a warfare the magnitude of which, at the present time, is very little known; and its cruelty and barbarity make a bloody page in the history of those times.

This book is a story of this warfare. It is a story of adventure, of hair-breadth escapes, and of daring deeds. In it the same characters figure as those in *With Lyon in Missouri* and *The Scout of Pea Ridge*. It tells how our young heroes were instrumental in thwarting the great conspiracy by which the Confederate government, by sending officers into the State, and organizing the different guerrilla bands into companies and regiments, was in hopes of wresting the State from Federal control.

As in former books, history is closely followed.

BYRON A. DUNN.  
Waukegan, Illinois.  
August, 1912.

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## CONTENTS

[PREFACE](#)  
[CHAPTER I. BRUNO CARRIES A MESSAGE](#)  
[CHAPTER II. AN INTERNECINE WAR](#)  
[CHAPTER III. A MYSTERIOUS COMMUNICATION](#)  
[CHAPTER IV. MOORE'S MILL](#)  
[CHAPTER V. A FIGHT IN THE NIGHT](#)  
[CHAPTER VI. KIRKSVILLE](#)  
[CHAPTER VII. POINDEXTER CAPTURED](#)  
[CHAPTER VIII. LONE JACK](#)  
[CHAPTER IX. CAPTURED BY GUERRILLAS](#)  
[CHAPTER X. THE GUERRILLA'S BRIDE](#)  
[CHAPTER XI. THE STORY OF CARL MEYER](#)  
[CHAPTER XII. THE NEWS FROM CORINTH](#)  
[CHAPTER XIII. PORTER CAPTURES PALMYRA](#)  
[CHAPTER XIV. TEN LIVES FOR ONE](#)  
[CHAPTER XV. A GIRL OF THE OZARKS](#)

[CHAPTER XVI. A WOUNDED CONFEDERATE](#)  
[CHAPTER XVII. TRAILING RED JERSEY](#)  
[CHAPTER XVIII. LIVE—I CANNOT SHOOT YOU](#)  
[CHAPTER XIX. MARK HAS A RIVAL](#)  
[CHAPTER XX. CAPTURING A TRAIN](#)  
[CHAPTER XXI. THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS](#)  
[CHAPTER XXII. MARK CONFESSES HIS LOVE](#)  
[CHAPTER XXIII. INTO THE LION'S MOUTH](#)  
[CHAPTER XXIV. PRAIRIE GROVE](#)  
[CHAPTER XXV. CALLED TO OTHER FIELDS](#)

[OTHERS IN SERIES](#)

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

["Follow the colors," he shouted.](#)

["Halt the advance. Ambuscade!" gasped Harry.](#)

[Down the street they rode at full speed.](#)

["You pretend to be men and call this war?"](#)

[To catch the rider as he reeled from the saddle.](#)

[He was looking into the muzzle of a revolver.](#)

[Her revolver was pointed at his breast.](#)

[An old man leaning on a staff.](#)

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## THE COURIER OF THE OZARKS

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### CHAPTER I

#### BRUNO CARRIES A MESSAGE

"Down! Bruno, down!"

These words were uttered in a guarded whisper by a boy about seventeen years of age, to a great dog that stood by his side.

At the word of command, the dog crouched down, his whole body quivering with excitement. His master gently patted him on the head, and whispered, "There, there, old fellow, don't get nervous. Our lives would not be worth much, if we were discovered."

The boy was lying full length on the ground, concealed in a dense thicket, but from his point of vantage he had a full view of the road which ran a few yards in front of him. This road ran north and south, and nearly in front of where he lay another road entered it, coming in from the west.

The cause of the dog's excitement was apparent, for coming up the road from the west was a large body of horsemen, and a motley troop they were. They were mostly dressed in homespun, and armed with all sorts of weapons, from cavalry sabers to heavy knives fashioned out of files by some rude blacksmith; the army musket, the squirrel rifle, and the shotgun were much in evidence.

As the head of the column reached the north and south road the leader called a halt, and looked up and down the road, as if expecting some one. He did not have long to wait. The sound of the swift beating of horse-hoofs was heard from the south, and soon three men came riding up. One, a man of distinguished looks and military bearing, was a little in advance of the other two. As he came up, the leader of the little army saluted him awkwardly and exclaimed, "Glad to see you, Colonel. What news?"

"Glad to see you, Captain Poindexter," replied the Colonel. "I see you are on time. As for the news, all goes well. Within a week all Missouri will be ablaze, and the hottest place for Yankees in all Christendom. How many men have you, Captain?"

"About five hundred, and more coming in all the time."

"So that is Jim Poindexter, the bloody villain," muttered the boy between his set teeth, and nervously fingering his revolver. "How I would like to take a shot at him! But it would not do. It

would be madness."

The next question asked by the Colonel, whose name was Clay, and who had been in the State for the past two months promoting the partisan uprising, was, "Where is Porter?"

"At Brown's Springs. I am to join him there tonight. But he was to meet me here with a few followers, knowing you were to be here."

"Good! I will be more than pleased to see him," answered Colonel Clay. "But I thought he was farther north."

"Most of his force is," answered Poindexter. "But he promised to meet me at Brown's Springs with five hundred followers. We have our eye on Fulton. My spies report it is garrisoned by less than a hundred men. Fulton captured, I can supply my men with both clothes and arms, and then Jefferson City next."

"Jefferson City?" asked Colonel Clay in surprise. "Do you look that far?"

"Yes. Thanks to the Yankee Government, there are not over five hundred soldiers in Jefferson City. Fulton once taken, the boys will flock to our standard by thousands, and Jefferson City will become an easy prey."

"Accomplish this, Poindexter," cried Colonel Clay, "and Missouri will be redeemed. All over southwestern Missouri the boys are rallying and sweeping northward. The object is to capture Independence, and then Lexington. This done, we will once more control the Missouri River, and the State will be anchored firmly in the Southern Confederacy. Then with your victorious legions you can march south and help drive the Yankee invaders from the land. Poindexter, Missouri can, and should, put fifty thousand Confederate soldiers in the field."

Poindexter shrugged his shoulders. "Colonel, not so fast," he exclaimed. "I could not drag my men into the regular Confederate service with a two-inch cable. Neither do I have any hankering that way myself. The free and easy life of a partisan ranger for me."

Colonel Clay looked disgusted. "Captain," he asked, "don't you get tired of skulking in the brush, and waging a warfare which is really contrary to the rules of war of civilized nations? There is little honor in such a warfare; but think of the honor and glory that would await you if you could free Missouri, and then help free the entire South. Why, it is not too much to say that the star of a general might glisten on your shoulder."

A look of rage came over the face of Poindexter. "If you don't like the way we fight," he growled, "why are you here, urging us to rise? If we can free this State of Yankees, we will accomplish more than your armies down south have. We prefer to fight our own way. Here, I am a bigger man than Jeff Davis. I fight when it suits me, and take to the brush when I want to. If you have any thoughts of influencing me or my men to join the regular Confederate army, you may as well give up the idea. As for the rules of civilized warfare, I don't care that," and he snapped his fingers contemptuously.

Colonel Clay concealed the indignation and disgust which he felt towards the fellow, and said: "While we may not think alike, we are both working for the same cause—the liberation of our beloved Southland from the ruthless invasion of the Yankee hordes. If you can accomplish what you think, surely the South will call you one of her most gallant sons. Neither should we be too squeamish over the means used to rid ourselves of the thieves and murderers that have overrun our fair State."

"Now you are talking," exclaimed Poindexter, with an oath. "If Porter comes—and he should be here by now—we will discuss the situation more thoroughly; but the first thing for us to do is to capture Fulton."

"Are you sure," asked Clay, "that your plans will not miscarry? Mr. Daniels, one of the gentlemen here with me, informs me that that regiment of devils, the Merrill Horse, is only a few miles to the west. May they not interfere with your plans?"

At the mention of the Merrill Horse, Poindexter's countenance took on a demoniac expression. Striking the pommel of his saddle with his clenched hand, he hissed: "I will never rest until I shoot or hang every one of that cursed regiment. But you are mistaken in thinking the force west consists of the entire Merrill Horse. Only part of the regiment is there; the rest is up north. The force west is about five hundred strong. I have given out the impression that I am making for the woods which skirt Grand River, to join Cobb. Every citizen they meet will tell them so. Little does Colonel Shaffer, who is in command, think I have slipped past him, McNeil believes Porter is up around Paris—the most of his force is—but he is to join me here with a goodly number. Ah! here he comes now."

Down the road from the north a party of horsemen were coming at a swift gallop. They rode up, and salutations were spoken and hands shaken.

A look of passion came into the face of the watching boy, and again he fingered his revolver. Even the dog partook of the boy's excitement, for his whole body was quivering.

"Quiet, old boy, quiet," whispered the boy. "No doubt you would like to tear the bloody monster to pieces, and I would give ten years of my life for a shot, but it will not do."

The boy was now listening intently, trying to catch every word that was said.

"Mighty glad to see you, Jo," Poindexter was saying. "How many men have you at Brown's Springs?"

"About four hundred when I left; but squads were coming in continually. I count on six hundred by night."

"Good! Then we will swoop down on Fulton tonight."

"Don't know about that," answered Porter. "Many of the boys have ridden, or will ride, fifty miles to join us. Their horses will be tired. Tomorrow will be all right. How is everything?"

"Splendid," answered Poindexter, rubbing his hands. "Not over a hundred soldiers in Fulton. The only drawback is that there is a Yankee force of about five hundred a few miles to the west, part of them the Merrill Horse."

"The Merrill Horse! The Merrill Horse!" cried Porter with a dreadful oath. "I thought they were north. They are surely giving me enough trouble up there."

"About four companies are down here, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Shaffer," answered Poindexter. "They have been trying to find me for the past week. But they haven't found me yet," and he chuckled. "The fact is," he continued, "I have fooled them. Shaffer thinks I am making for the woods along the Grand River, to join Cobb. I skipped past him last night. By this time he is making for the Grand River as fast as he can go. No trouble from him in our little business with Fulton."

"Don't be too sure," exclaimed Porter. "Shaffer is about as sharp as the devil; but I trust you are right."

The conversation now took a general turn, Colonel Clay going over the ground, telling them what was being done, and what he hoped would be accomplished. "As for me," he said, "I must be across the river by tomorrow. Everything depends on the movement to capture Independence and Lexington. Then, if you gentlemen are successful here, and capture Fulton and Jefferson City, our brightest hopes will be fulfilled. I must now bid you good-bye. May success attend you."

The Colonel and his two friends rode back towards the south, from whence they came. Poindexter watched them until they were out of sight, and then, turning to Porter, said: "What do you think, Jo? The Colonel wanted me and my men to join the regular Confederate army."

"Humph!" sniffed Porter, "I reckon you jumped at the chance."

"Not much; but he did more. He mentioned that I was not conducting this blood-letting business strictly on the rules of genteel, scientific murder."

"I reckon, before we indulged in a necktie party, he would want us to say, 'Beg pardon, sir, but I am under the painful necessity of hanging you,'" replied Porter, indulging in a coarse laugh.

"I told him," continued Poindexter, "we fought as we pleased, and asked no favors of General Price, Jeff Davis, or any other man. As for the Confederate service, none of it for me."

"They have offered me a colonelcy, if I take my men down into Arkansas," answered Porter. "If it gets too hot for me here I may go. You know there is a price on my head. But I must go, or my boys will be getting uneasy. Join me at the Springs as soon as possible." Thus saying, he and his party rode away.

Poindexter ordered his men to fall in, and they followed Porter, but at a more leisurely gait.

When the last one had disappeared, the boy arose and shook himself. "What do you think of that, Bruno?" he asked, patting the dog's head. The dog stood with hanging head and tail, as if ashamed he had let so many of his enemies get away unharmed. He looked up in his master's face and whined at the question, as much as to say, "I don't like it."

"Well, my boy, there is the Old Nick to pay. Both Porter and Poindexter on the warpath. Fulton to be attacked, and not a hundred men to defend it. Shaffer with the boys miles away. How are both to be warned? We must see, old fellow, we must see. There is no time to lose."

Thus saying, the boy hurriedly made his way back through the woods where in a hollow in the midst of a dense thicket a horse stood concealed. Those who have read "The Scout of Pea Ridge" will readily recognize the boy as Harry Semans, and Bruno as his celebrated trained dog. After the battle of Pea Ridge and upon the dissolution of the company of scouts under the command of Captain Lawrence Middleton, Harry had returned to Missouri, and become a scout for the Merrill Horse. The Merrill Horse, officially known as the Second Missouri Cavalry, was a regiment composed of companies from Missouri, Illinois, and Michigan.

It can safely be said that no other regiment in the Federal army ever saw more service in fighting guerrillas than did the Merrill Horse. From the very first of the war their work was to help exterminate the guerrilla bands which infested the State. The name "Merrill Horse" became a terror to every bushwhacker and guerrilla in Missouri. No trail was so obtuse, no thicket so dense that members of that regiment would not track them to their lair. A true history of the Merrill Horse, and the adventures of its different members, would read like the most exciting fiction.

When Harry reached his horse he stood for a moment in deep thought, and then speaking to Bruno, said: "Yes, old boy, you must do it. I know you can, can't you?"

Bruno gave a bark and wagged his tail as if to say, "Try me."

Tearing a leaf from a blank book, Harry wrote a brief note to Colonel Shaffer, telling him what had happened, and begging him to march with all speed to Fulton. This note he securely fastened to Bruno's collar and said, "Bruno, go find Colonel Shaffer and the boys. You know where we left them. Go."

For a moment Bruno stood and looked up in his master's face, as if undecided.

"Go and find Colonel Shaffer. Go," Harry repeated, sternly.

The dog turned and was away like a shot. Harry gazed after him until he was out of sight, then patting the glossy neck of his horse, said, "Now, Bess, it's you and I for Fulton; the machinations of those two archfiends, Poindexter and Porter, must be brought to naught."

Harry believed he would have no trouble in reaching Fulton, as the guerrillas were generally quiet near a place garrisoned by Federal troops, therefore he took the main road, as he was desirous of reaching Fulton as soon as he possibly could. He had not gone more than two miles when he met two men, rough-looking fellows, whom Harry had no desire to meet, but there was no way to avoid it, except flight, so he rode boldly forward.

Harry was dressed in the homespun of the country, and had all the appearance of a country bumpkin. As to arms, none were visible, but stowed away beneath his rough jacket was a huge navy revolver, and Harry was an adept in the use of it.

"Hello, youn' feller," cried one of the men. "Whar be yo' goin' in sich a hurry? Halt, and give an account of yo'self."

"Goin' to Fulton, if the Yanks will let me," drawled Harry. "Whar be yo 'uns goin'?"

"That 's nun yo' business. Air yo 'un Union or Confed?"

"Which be yo'uns?"

"Look heah, young feller, nun of yo' foolin'. I reckon yo' air a Yank in disguise. That 's a mighty fine hoss yo 'un air ridin'. 'Spose we 'uns trade."

"'Spose we 'uns don't."

During this conversation Harry's right hand was resting beneath his jacket, grasping the butt of his revolver.

"I reckon we 'uns will," jeered the fellow, reaching for his pistol.

Quick as a flash Harry had covered him with his revolver. Fortunately for him, the two men were close together. "Hands up," he ordered. "A move, a motion to draw a weapon, and one or both of you will die. It don't pay to fool with one of Porter's men."

The hands of both went up, but one exclaimed, "One of Porter's men? Be yo' one of Porter's men? We 'uns are on our way to join him. We 'uns heard he was at Brown's Springs."

"Yo 'uns will find him thar. I am taking a message from him to a friend in Fulton. Yo 'uns can lower your hands. I reckon we 'uns understand each other now."

"We 'uns certainly do," said one of the men, as they dropped their hands, looking foolish.

"Wall, good-bye; may see yo 'uns in Fulton tomorrow." And Harry rode off, leaving the men sitting on their horses watching him.

"Ought to have shot both of them," muttered Harry, "but I cannot afford to take any risks just now."

Harry had no further adventures in reaching Fulton, and at once reported to Captain Duffield, who was in command of the post.

Captain Duffield listened to Harry's report with a troubled countenance.

"A thousand of the devils, did you say?" he asked.

"Yes, and more coming in every hour."

"And I have only eighty men," replied Duffield, bitterly. "If they attack before I can get help, there is no hope for us."

"Colonel Shaffer is a few miles to the west with about five hundred men," replied Harry. "If they do not attack tonight, as I do not reckon they will from what Porter said, he may be here in time to help. I have sent him word."

"Sent him word? By whom?" asked Outfield, eagerly.

"By my dog," and Harry explained.

As Duffield listened, his countenance fell. "I see no hope from that," he said. "It is preposterous to

think that a dog will carry a message for miles, and hunt up a man."

"If you knew Bruno, you would think differently," replied Harry, smiling.

"I can put no dependence on any such thing," said Duffield. "My only hope is getting word to Colonel Guitar, at Jefferson City. If I get any help, it must come from him. God grant that Porter may not attack tonight."

"I think there is little danger tonight, but they may be down in the morning," said Harry. "Do you think Guitar can reinforce you by morning?"

"He must; he must. I will send a message to him by courier mounted on one of my fleetest horses."

"Bess is about as fast as they make them," replied Harry. "I know the country. I will go if you wish."

Duffield looked at him a moment doubtfully, and then said, "You may go, as you can tell Colonel Guitar all you have told me. But I will send one of my own men with you."

Captain Duffield wrote two messages, giving one to Harry, and the other to the soldier who was to accompany him.

"If you have trouble," said Captain Duffield, "for the love of Heaven, one of you get through, if the other is killed. The safety of this post depends on Colonel Guitar receiving the message."

"It will go through, if I live," calmly replied Harry, as he carefully concealed the message in the lining of his coat.

To Harry's surprise, the soldier detailed to go with him proved to be a boy, not much older than himself. He was mounted on a spirited horse and his manner showed he was ready for any kind of an adventure, no matter where it might lead.

The shades of night were falling when Captain Duffield bade them good-bye, and they rode away and were soon lost to view in the dusk.

Captain Duffield stood looking after them, and then said to one of his lieutenants, "I don't know what to make of that boy. He told a straight story, but his thinking that dog of his would take a message to Shaffer is a little too much to believe."

But Captain Duffield soon had other things to think about. Reports began to come in from other sources of the gathering of the guerrillas at Brown's Springs, and their number was augmented to two thousand. He posted his little force in the best manner possible to resist an attack, and with an anxious heart, watched and waited through the long hours of the night; but to his immense relief, no attack came.

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## CHAPTER II

### AN INTERNECINE WAR

After the battle of Pea Ridge, the Confederate Government had no regular organized troops in Missouri. General Sterling Price, with his Missouri regiments, which had enlisted in the Confederate service, was ordered east of the Mississippi. But there were thousands of State troops that had followed Price, and although they refused to enlist in the regular Confederate service, they were, at heart, as bitter towards the Union as ever. These men found their way back home, and although thousands of them took the oath of allegiance to the Federal Government, the majority of them were not only ready, but eager, to ally themselves with some of the guerrilla bands which were infesting the State.

The Federal authorities, knowing that Price, with his army, had been ordered east, thought that the Confederates had given up all hopes of holding the State, and that the fighting was over, except with small guerrilla bands, that could easily be kept in check. Therefore, the great majority of the Federal troops in Missouri were withdrawn to swell the armies of Buell and Grant.

The Confederates now thought they saw their opportunity. Numbers of the Confederate officers secretly made their way into the State and commenced to organize the disloyal forces, co-operating with the guerrilla bands. Among these officers was Colonel Clay, who appeared in the first chapter.

This movement was so successful that during the summer of 1862 it is estimated that there were from thirty to forty thousand of these men enrolled and officered. Places of rendezvous were designated, where all were to assemble at a given signal, and, by a coup-de-main, seize all the important points in the State which were feebly garrisoned. Then they were to co-operate with an army moving up from Arkansas, and the State would be redeemed.

It was a well laid plan, but fortunately it was early discovered by General J. M. Schofield, who was in command of the Department of Missouri. How General Schofield first received his information will be told hereafter.

General Schofield frantically appealed to Halleck for aid, and then to Washington, but he was answered that owing to the great military movements going on, not a regiment could be spared.

General Schofield, thus left to his own resources, rose grandly to the occasion. He would use the Confederates' own tactics. So he ordered the entire militia of the State to be enrolled. Thousands of Confederate sympathizers fled the State, or took to the bush. During the summer of 1862 between forty and fifty thousand loyal State militia were organized. Thus the whole State became one vast armed camp, nearly forty thousand men on a side, arrayed against each other.

It was father against son, brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor. The only wonder is that owing to the passions of the times there were not more excesses and murders committed than there were.

During the year 1862 there were at least one hundred and fifty engagements fought on the soil of Missouri, in which the numbers engaged varied from forty or fifty to five or six thousand. In these engagements General Schofield says the Union troops were successful in nine out of ten, and that at least three thousand guerrillas had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, and that ten thousand had fled the State.

This terrible warfare between neighbors receives scant mention in history, but in no great battles of the war was greater bravery shown, greater heroism displayed, than in many of the minor engagements fought in Missouri.

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## CHAPTER III

### A MYSTERIOUS COMMUNICATION

In the month of May, 1862, a young Federal officer reported in St. Louis, and found himself without a command, and without a commission. This officer, Captain Lawrence Middleton, had greatly distinguished himself during the first year of the war on the staff of General Nathaniel Lyon. After the death of Lyon he was commissioned a captain by General Fremont, and authorized to raise an independent company of scouts. With this company he had rendered valiant service in the campaign which ended with the battle of Pea Ridge.

Many of the acts of Fremont, and a number of commissions which he had granted, had been repudiated by the Government, and thus Middleton had found himself free. But he had no intention of remaining inactive, his heart was too much in the cause. If no other field was open, he would enlist as a private soldier. But there was no need of that, he was too well known. Though young, scarcely more than eighteen, he had rendered services and performed deeds which made his name known throughout the State. He had thwarted the machinations of Frost, Price, Governor Jackson, and other disloyal leaders in their efforts to drag Missouri out of the Union.

While Lawrence was undecided just what to do he met Frank P. Blair, who was overjoyed to see him. He had been Blair's private secretary during the troublesome months before the opening of the war, and a lieutenant in one of his regiments of Home Guards.

Blair, who had been appointed a brigadier general in the Federal army, had been at home on business, and was about to return to his command.

"Never better pleased to see anyone in my life," said Blair, nearly shaking Lawrence's arm off. "Oh, I've kept track of you, you've been keeping up your reputation. But what are you doing in St. Louis? I thought you were with Curtis."

Lawrence told Blair of his predicament,—that he was now without a command or a commission.

"Good!" cried Blair, shaking Lawrence's hand again. "I was about to write to Curtis to see if I could not get you away from him. I will see that you are commissioned as captain, and I will detail you on my staff. I need just such fellows as you."

"I couldn't ask anything better," said Lawrence, "and, General, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It is more than I could have possibly hoped, more than I deserve."

"Too modest, my boy. If you had your deserts, you would be wearing a star on your shoulder, as well as myself. I am a little selfish in asking you to go on my staff. I want you."

So it was all arranged, and Lawrence went to see his uncle and tell him of his new position on Blair's staff. This uncle, Alfred Middleton, was one of the wealthiest citizens of St. Louis, and an ardent secessionist. Now that Lawrence was out of the army, he was in hopes that he would stay out, and he showed his disappointment in his face. He had also been greatly worried of late. His only son was with Price, and it was a sore spot with him that the Missouri Confederate troops had been ordered east, and not been left to defend their native State.

In fact, the Confederates of the State felt that they had been deserted by the Richmond Government, and bore Jeff Davis and his cabinet no great love.

"I am sorry, Lawrence," said his uncle, sadly. "I was in hopes that as long as you were out of the



army you would stay out. Why will you persist in fighting against those who were your friends? Your whole interest lies with the South."

"Uncle, please do not let us discuss that question again," replied Lawrence. "You and I are both firm in our belief, and no amount of discussion will change either."

Mr. Middleton sighed, but did not resume the subject. That Lawrence, whom he looked upon almost as a son, should take up arms against the South was to him a source of endless regret.

The next two or three days were busy ones with Lawrence. The new arrangement had one drawback, it would separate him from Dan Sherman, who had been a lieutenant in his company of scouts, and the two were inseparable. Dan would not hear of parting from Lawrence; he would go with him if he had to go as his servant.

"I can never consent to that, Dan," said Lawrence. "I had rather tell Blair I have reconsidered his proposition and cannot accept."

"You'll do no such thing," retorted Sherman. "I will try and behave myself, but I feel that something will happen, and we will not be separated."

Something did happen, much quicker than either one expected. Something which entirely changed the calculations of Lawrence. It was to be some months before he saw service with Blair.

Lawrence and Dan were passing a newspaper office, before which a large crowd had gathered, reading the war bulletins. They told that Halleck was tightening his lines around Corinth and that the place must soon fall; and that McClellan was well on his way towards Richmond.

It was curious to watch the faces of those who read. The countenances of those who were for the Union would brighten when anything was posted favorable to the Union cause, and now and then a cheer would be given.

The iron heel of the Yankees was on St. Louis, and the Confederate sympathizers dare not be so outspoken, but when anything favorable to the South was posted their eyes would flash, and their countenances beam with joy.

And thus the crowd stood and read, once friends and neighbors, but now ready to rend each other to pieces at the first opportunity.

Lawrence mingled with the crowd, and as he read he felt a bulky envelope thrust in his hand and caught a glimpse of a dusky arm. He glanced at the address and then turned to see who had given it to him, but could not. He glanced at the envelope again. Yes, it was for him. In bold letters was written, "For Captain Lawrence Middleton. Important."

The writing was strange to Lawrence, and making his way through the crowd he sought a private place where he could see what had so mysteriously come into his possession. As he read, a look of surprise came over his face, and then his countenance grew stern and grim. Carefully he read the document through from beginning to end. It was signed "By One Who Knows." There was not a mark to tell who was the writer. The writing was strong and bold, and possessed an originality of its own, as if the writer had put much of his own character in it. Lawrence sat and pondered long. He looked the manuscript over and over again to see if he could not discover some private mark, something that would identify the writer, but he found nothing.

"Strange," he muttered, "but if Guilford Craig was alive I would swear he was the writer of this. Who else would write me, and me alone, and give such important information? Who else could obtain the information contained in this letter? Yet Guilford is dead. Benton Shelly was seen to shoot him. There were those who saw him lying on the ground, still in death, his bosom drenched in blood. But his body was not found. Guilford, Guilford, are you still alive? But why do I indulge in such vain hope that he is alive? The proof of his death is too plain. This letter must have been written by another, but who? Who? And why send it to me?"

The letter was, in fact, a full and complete *exposé* of the plans of the Confederates. It told of the conception of the plot; who was carrying it out; of the hundreds who had taken the oath of allegiance in order that they might work more securely, and that many had even enlisted in the State militia, so that when the supreme time came they could desert: the time set for the uprising was the last of July or else the first of August, by which time they hoped to have at least forty thousand men enrolled.

"Blair and Schofield must see this, and no time lost," said Lawrence to himself as he placed the communication carefully in his pocket.

Blair was soon found. After carefully reading the letter he said, "I am not surprised. I warned the Government of the folly of removing so many troops from the State. But who could have written this?"

"If Guilford Craig was alive there would be but one answer," replied Lawrence. "As it is, it is a mystery."

"Let us see Schofield at once," said Blair. "There should be no time lost."

Repairing to the headquarters of General Schofield, they were readily admitted. General Schofield was the chief of staff to General Lyon at the time of the battle of Wilson Creek, and, of course, knew Lawrence well. "Glad to see you, Captain," said the General. "Curtis has written me

of your good work. You are not with him now, are you?"

"No, you know the commission I held was granted by Fremont. The authorities at Washington declared it illegal."

"Ah, there was a large number of those commissions. I must see what I can do for you."

"I thank you, General, but General Blair has just done me the great honor of appointing me on his staff."

"General Blair, as well as yourself, is to be congratulated," answered the General.

Blair now spoke. "General, our business with you is very important. Captain Middleton, please show the General the communication you received."

Lawrence handed the General the mysterious message and Schofield read it with a darkened brow.

"Who wrote this?" he asked, abruptly.

"General, I do not know."

"Then it may be a fake, a joke. Someone may be trying to scare us."

"General, it is no joke, the proof is too positive," replied Lawrence, earnestly.

"That is so," answered the General. "It also confirms rumors I have been hearing. There has been unusual activity among Southern sympathizers, all over the State, yet outside of the guerrilla bands there have been no hostile demonstrations. This must have been written by someone deep in their counsels."

"General, do you remember Guilford Craig?"

"Remember him! Indeed, I do. Can I ever forget what he and you were to Lyon?"

"If Guilford Craig had not been killed at the battle of Pea Ridge I would be positive the communication came from him. But the handwriting bears no resemblance to his."

"Are you certain he was killed?"

"The proof seems positive, but his body was not found," answered Lawrence.

Schofield sat for a moment in silence, and then suddenly said to Blair, "General Blair, I have a great favor to ask of you."

"What is it, General? Any favor I can give you will be readily granted."

"That you relinquish your claim on Captain Middleton, at least, until this crisis is over, and let me have him."

Blair looked surprised, but no more so than Lawrence.

"You know," continued Schofield, "there is no one who can help me more just now than Captain Middleton. No one who understands the work before me better. This Guilford Craig, as you are aware, was a curious character. To no one would he report but to Captain Middleton. This *exposé*, coming to Middleton, instead of to me, leads me to believe that Craig was not killed, as supposed, but in some way got off the field, and for reasons, known only to himself, remains in hiding. Judging the future by the past, if he is alive, and has more information to impart, it would be given only through the same source. For these reasons I would like to attach Captain Middleton to my staff."

"General, your reasons are good," replied Blair, "and it shall be for Captain Middleton to decide."

"Where I can do my country the most good, there I am willing to go," answered Lawrence.

So it was decided that for the summer Lawrence should remain with General Schofield. The words of General Schofield had also given Lawrence hope that Guilford lived. But as weeks and months passed, and no other communication came to him, he again looked upon Guilford as dead.

Hopeless of getting relief from the Federal Government, General Schofield entered upon the gigantic task of organizing the militia of the State. In this Lawrence was of the greatest service, and through a system of spies and scouts he was enabled to keep General Schofield well informed as to what was going on in the State.

In helping organize the militia, Lawrence had many adventures and many hair-breadth escapes, and by his side always rode the faithful Dan Sherman, and together they shared every danger.

By the last of July, as has been stated, there were nearly one hundred thousand men arrayed against each other. It was a partisan warfare on a mighty scale, and the storm was about to burst.

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## CHAPTER IV

### MOORE'S MILL

We left Harry Semans and his young companion just starting on their lonely ride to Jefferson City, a distance of twenty-seven miles. The soldier with Harry proved rather a garrulous youth. He said his name was David Harris; that he belonged to the Third Iowa Cavalry; was a farmer boy, and rather liked the service. "It's exciting, you know," he added.

"Very much so at times," dryly answered Harry.

"Say, what makes you dress like a blamed guerrilla?" suddenly asked Dave. "You are a soldier, aren't you?"

"I am a scout," replied Harry. "I dress like a guerrilla because I have to pretend to be one about half the time. Just before I reached Fulton today I passed myself off as one of Porter's men. It saved me a dangerous encounter, perhaps my life."

"Gee! it must be exciting," said the boy. "I wish I was a scout."

"Couldn't be one," laughed Harry. "Your Yankee brogue would give you away. I notice you say 'keow' instead of 'cow' and 'guess' instead of 'reckon.' But please don't talk any more, we must keep both ears and eyes open."

After this they rode along in silence; that is, as much as Dave would allow, until Harry ordered him to ride in the rear, and if he must talk, talk to himself, and so low that no one else could hear.

For some ten miles they proceeded at a swift gallop without adventure, meeting two or three horsemen who seemed as little desirous of making acquaintance as they were themselves, and Dave began to think the ride rather tame.

As they were passing a place where the bushes grew thickly by the side of the road, they received a gruff command to halt. Instead of obeying, Harry, as quick as thought, drew his revolver and fired, at the same time putting spurs to his horse and shouting to Harris, "Ride for your life."

There was a rustling in the bushes, an angry exclamation as well as a groan. Harry's shot had gone true, and came as a surprise to the bushwhackers as well, for two or three seconds elapsed before three or four shots rang out, and they went wild.

"Well, how do you like it?" asked Harry, as he drew rein, considering the danger past.

"It was so sudden," said Dave. "I think I would have halted, and asked what was wanted."

"And got gobbled, and in all probability hanged afterwards. Dave, you have to learn something yet before you become a scout. Always be ready to fire at a moment's notice; and if you have to run don't tarry on your going. I took chances as to whether there was a large party or not, but concluded it was not, or some of them would have been in the road."

"Did you think of all that? Why, the word 'Halt' was hardly out of the fellow's mouth when you fired."

"Think quickly, act quickly; it has saved my bacon many a time. You ought to have been with me when I was with Captain Lawrence Middleton. There is the fellow to ride with. But this wouldn't have happened if Bruno had been with me."

"Bruno? Who is Bruno?" asked Dave.

"Bruno is my dog. He would have smelled those fellows out before we were within forty rods of them. I am never afraid of a surprise when Bruno is with me. But no more talking now."

Once more their horses took up a swinging gallop, and they met with no further adventures, and within less than three hours from the time they started they were halted by the Union pickets who guarded the approach to the river opposite Jefferson City.

Harry demanded of the Lieutenant in command of the picket that they be ferried across the river without loss of time, but the Lieutenant demurred, saying it was against orders to allow anyone to cross the river during the night.

"I have important dispatches from Captain Duffield to Colonel Guitar. Refuse to take me over, and I would not give much for your command," angrily answered Harry.

"Who are you?" demanded the Lieutenant. "From your dress you are certainly not a soldier."

"I am Harry Semans, scout for the Merrill Horse," answered Harry.

"At the name 'Merrill Horse' the Lieutenant became as meek as a lamb.

"Excuse me," he exclaimed. "I will see that you get over the river immediately. Anything new at Fulton?"

"Porter and Poindexter are within eleven miles of the place, and Duffield expects to be attacked by morning."

The Lieutenant gave a low whistle. "The devil," he ejaculated, and rushed to give the necessary orders.

It was eleven o'clock before the river was crossed and the headquarters of Colonel Guitar reached. He had just retired, but Harry and Dave were without ceremony admitted into his bedroom. The Colonel read the dispatch of Captain Duffield, sitting on his bed in his nightclothes.

At once all was excitement. There were but five hundred men guarding the important post of Jefferson City. Of this force, Colonel Guitar ordered one hundred to accompany him to Fulton. He dared not deplete the little garrison more.

While Harry and Dave were in the Colonel's bedroom, Harry noticed that Dave was regarding Guitar with a great deal of interest. When they passed out Dave said to Harry in a whisper, "That general don't amount to shucks. Think of him fighting Porter?"

"Why, what's the matter with Guitar?" asked Harry.

"Matter! He wears a nightgown just like a woman. Who ever heard of a man wearing a nightgown?"<sup>[1]</sup>

Harry exploded with laughter. "Many men wear nightgowns," he explained. "I have no doubt but what General Schofield does. I reckon you will find out that Guitar will fight."

During the day there had been two important arrivals in Jefferson City, that of Lawrence Middleton and Dan Sherman. They had told Colonel Guitar of the rapid concentration of the guerrilla bands all through the counties north of the river, and had warned him to be on the lookout for trouble. In fact, they had brought orders from General Schofield for him to send two of his companies to Columbia, as it was thought that was the place in greatest danger.

Lawrence and Dan were told of the danger that threatened Fulton, and they determined to accompany Guitar in his expedition.

It was not until they were on the ferryboat crossing the river that Harry was aware that Lawrence and Dan were of the number. He nearly went wild on seeing them.

"And how is Bruno?" asked Lawrence.

"Bruno is all right. I sent him with a dispatch to Colonel Shaffer."

Hurry as fast as they could, it was long past midnight before the force was across the river, and then there was a twenty-seven mile ride ahead of them.

On the march Harry had an opportunity to tell Lawrence much that had happened to him since they parted.

It was daylight when Fulton was reached, and, much to their relief, the place had not been attacked, but the excitement ran high. Rumor had increased Porter's force to two thousand. Colonel Guitar believed this estimate to be much too high. So, small as his force was, only one hundred and eighty, he determined to move out and attack Porter without delay.

When this became known to the few Union inhabitants of Fulton they implored Guitar not to do it. "Your force will be annihilated," they exclaimed, "and Fulton will be at the mercy of the foe."

Lawrence agreed with Colonel Guitar. "We came here in the night," said he. "Porter does not know how many men you brought. No doubt your force is magnified, the same as his. Assuming the offensive will disconcert him, and also prevent him receiving further reinforcements."

So it was decided, and the little force took up the march for Brown's Springs, eleven miles away. Couriers were dispatched to find Colonel Shaffer, for even if Bruno had succeeded in delivering Harry's message Shaffer would march for Fulton instead of Brown's Springs.

It was about eleven o'clock when the column reached the vicinity of Brown's Springs. Nothing as yet had been heard from Colonel Shaffer, but Guitar determined to attack. Lawrence had been asked by Guitar to act as his aid, to which he gladly assented.

Two or three small parties of guerrillas had been sighted, but they took to the brush at the sight of the Federals.

The command now moved cautiously forward, but there was to be no battle. Harry, who had been scouting in front, returned with the news that the guerrillas had fled. Their camp was soon occupied. Everything showed a rapid flight; even the would-be dinner of the guerrillas was found half cooked.

Along in the afternoon Porter's force was located near Moore's Mill, about four miles distant.

As Colonel Guitar's men had not slept a wink the night before, and as both men and horses were tired out, the Colonel decided to camp, rest his men and await the coming of Shaffer.

Why Porter fled from Brown's Springs and yet gave battle the next day, after Shaffer had come up, will never be known. If he had fought at Brown's Springs he would have had five men to Guitar's one. He may have thought Shaffer was miles away. What Poindexter had told him would lead him to believe this. And it would have been the case had it not been for Harry and the faithful Bruno.

Every precaution was taken by Colonel Guitar to guard against a night attack, but his little army was allowed to rest in peace.

During the night the couriers sent out to locate Shaffer reported. Bruno had done his work well, but Shaffer had been miles farther away than thought, and as had been requested by Harry in his report, had marched for Fulton. He was yet ten miles away, and it would be impossible for him to join Guitar before morning.

The morning came and with it Shaffer, and with him five hundred and fifty men, eager for the combat. How Guitar's men did cheer when they saw Shaffer coming.

Scouts reported that Porter still occupied his camp, and showed no sign of moving. It looked as if he had resolved to stay and fight. Colonel Guitar gave the order to move forward and attack. The advance had to be carefully made, for the country was rough, wooded, and covered with a dense undergrowth of bushes.

Harry now had Bruno with him, and leaving his horse, he, with the dog, made his way to the front, in order to discover, as far as possible, the plans and position of the enemy. So dense was the undergrowth he could not see thirty feet ahead of him, but Bruno, as stealthy as a tiger in the jungle, crept through the bushes ahead of him and more than once gave him warning to turn aside his steps and take another direction. At last he came to quite a hill, on the summit of which grew a tree with branches close to the ground. Leaving Bruno to guard, Harry climbed the tree, and to his satisfaction had a good view of the country. But what he saw filled him with consternation.

The road on which the Federals were marching was narrow and on each side lined with dense underbrush. Ahead of the Federal advance, the road itself was clear, not a guerrilla in sight, but Porter had left his camp and all his forces were stealthily creeping through the woods, and concealing themselves in the bushes which lined the road.

Harry knew that that meant an ambush, and the Federal advance was almost into it. In his eagerness he hardly knew whether he fell, jumped, or swung himself down by the branches, but he was out of the tree and tearing through the brush like a mad man to give warning.

He came to the road just as Colonel Guitar came along, riding at the head of his column, the advance, consisting of twenty-five men of Company E, Third Iowa Cavalry, being a short distance ahead.

"Halt the advance. Ambuscade," gasped Harry. He could say no more, as he fell from exhaustion.



**"Halt the advance. Ambuscade," gasped Harry.**

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Guitar understood. "Halt," he cried, and to an aid, "Warn the advance."

The aid put spurs to his horse, but he was too late. Before he could give warning there came a

crashing volley from the jungle on the east side of the road, the thicket burst into flame and smoke. It was an awful, a murderous volley. Out of the twenty-five men who composed the advance, hardly a man or horse escaped unscathed; all were killed or wounded.

Swift and terrible as this blow was, it created no panic in Guitar's little army. The road was narrow, thickets on each side. Nothing could be done with cavalry. Quickly the order was given to dismount and send the horses back in charge of every fourth man. Guitar then formed his slender line in the edge of the thicket on the west side of the road, with orders to hold until Shaffer came up, for Shaffer was still behind.

Hearing the sound of the conflict, Shaffer rushed forward, sent back his horses, and along the road and through the tangled undergrowth the line was formed and the battle became general.

The guerrillas displayed a bravery they seldom showed when engaged with regular troops, and fought with determination and ferocity. They had the advantage in position and numbers, but Guitar had the advantage in having a couple of pieces of artillery. One of these pieces was brought up by hand and planted in the road where it could sweep the woods in which the guerrillas were concealed.

Hidden from view, the guerrillas crept up near, poured in a murderous volley, and then raising a blood-curdling yell, dashed for the gun. Four of the gunners had fallen before the volley, and for the time the gun was silent. But behind the piece lay a line of sturdy cavalymen. They waited until the guerrillas had burst from the thicket and were within forty feet of the gun, then sprang to their feet and poured a terrific volley almost into the faces of the foe.

Staggering and bleeding, the guerrillas shrank back into the woods, but only to rally and with fearful yells dash for the gun again. This time they were not met by the cavalymen alone, but the cannon belched forth its deadly charge of canister in their faces.

When the four gunners fell at the first charge, Dan Sherman, seeing that the piece was not manned, rushed forward and snatched the primer from the dead hand of the man who was about to insert it when he fell. Dan inserted the primer, pulled the lanyard and sent the contents of the gun into the ranks of the enemy. Two of the artillerymen who had not been injured came to his assistance, and again the gun was thundering forth its defiance.

Through the chaparral Shaffer's men now pushed their way foot by foot. It was a strange conflict. So dense was the undergrowth the line could not be followed by the eye for thirty feet. No foe could be seen, but the thickets blazed and smoked, and the leaden hail swept through the bushes, tearing and mangling them as if enraged at their resistance.

The duty of Lawrence was a dangerous one. He had to break his way through the thickets, see that some kind of a line was kept, and that orders were being executed. While the men were sheltered by trees, logs and rocks, he had to be exposed, but as if possessed of a charmed life, he passed through unscathed.

Foot by foot the Federals dragged themselves forward, slowly pressing the guerrillas back. At last, tired of fighting an unseen foe, the men arose to their feet, and with a wild cheer sprang forward. Surprised, the foe wavered, then broke. The flight became a panic, and they fled terror-stricken from the field. The battle of Moore's Mill had been fought and won.

There was no pursuit that night. The day had been intensely hot, and the battle had raged from twelve noon until four. The soldiers, with blackened, swollen faces and tongues, were fainting with thirst. Colonel Guitar ordered his men to occupy the camp deserted by the foe. The dead were to be buried, the wounded cared for.

So precipitously had the guerrillas fled that except the severely wounded, few prisoners were taken. Porter had impressed upon his men that to be captured by the Yankees meant certain death.

While searching the field Lawrence noticed some white object crawling along like a large reptile. Upon investigation he found to his surprise that it was a man, and entirely nude.

"Why are you without clothes?" asked Lawrence.

The man looked tip into Lawrence's face with a scared expression and whined, "The guerrillas captured me, and they stripped me of my clothing."

"Then you are a Federal soldier?" inquired Lawrence.

"Y-e-s," came the halting answer.

"You lie," exclaimed Lawrence. "You are one of the guerrillas."

The fellow then broke down, and, piteously begging for his life, said he was one of Porter's men, and that he looked for nothing but death if captured, so he had divested himself of his clothing, hoping to pass himself off as a Federal.<sup>[2]</sup>

Lawrence ordered him to be tenderly cared for, and tears of gratitude ran down the fellow's face when he realised he was not to be murdered.

The battle of Moore's Mill, insignificant as it was compared to the great battles of the war, was important in this: It frustrated the plans of the conspirators, and was the beginning of a series of

conflicts which forever ended the hopes of the Confederates to recapture the State by an uprising.

Colonel Guitar reported his loss in the battle as thirteen killed and fifty-five wounded. The guerrilla loss he reported at fifty-two left dead on the field and one hundred and twenty-five wounded.

In all the partisan battles in Missouri the guerrillas never reported their losses, and only the reports of the Federal commanders are accessible. In many cases no doubt these reports are exaggerated.

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## CHAPTER V

### A FIGHT IN THE NIGHT

Early the next morning Colonel Guitar started in pursuit of the enemy. Lawrence took the advance with a party of six men. As a matter of course, Harry and Bruno made a part of this force.

"This seems like old times, Harry," said Lawrence, as they started off.

"It does that, Captain," replied Harry. "You, Dan, Bruno and myself make four of the old gang. Now if only Guilford was with us—" He stopped and sighed. His mind had gone back to the time when he and Guilford had so nearly faced death in among the Boston mountains. "You have heard nothing of him, have you, Captain?"

"Nothing. I did receive a communication about two months ago that I thought might be from him; but I have received nothing since and I have given up all hopes."

The trail left by the guerrillas was very plain. It followed the Auxvasse for some two miles, and then turned off into the hills. The country was very rough, the places for an ambuscade numerous, but with Bruno scouting, Lawrence had no fears of being surprised.

Soon they came to a place where the road forked. On the road that led to the left up the Auxvasse the trail was plainly marked; but the road that led on into the more open country had little appearance of being traveled; but it was rocky, and by being careful a large force could have passed over it and left but few traces behind.

Harry dismounted and carefully examined the ground. As for Bruno, he seemed to have no doubt; he was taking the blind trail.

"A blind," said Harry. "Not more than fifty took to the left, and they left as broad a trail as possible. The main force passed up the other road. If Guitar follows the broad trail it will lead him away among the hills and then disappear, for the party will separate."

Just then the advance of Guitar's force appeared, led by a young lieutenant.

"What are you waiting for?" he asked Lawrence. "Have you discovered the enemy?"

"No, but Porter evidently divided his forces here, and we were discussing which road the main body took."

The Lieutenant dismounted, and after looking over the ground, said, "Why, it's as plain as the nose on a man's face; they went to the left."

"Harry and Bruno both think differently," answered Lawrence.

The Lieutenant sniffed. "Much they know about it," he exclaimed. "I have trailed too many guerrillas to be mistaken."

Just then Colonel Guitar, at the head of his column, appeared. He was appealed to, and after examining the road, decided to take the left hand road, but told Lawrence he might keep on the other road with his scouts, and see what he could discover. As a matter of precaution he increased Lawrence's force to ten men.

The Lieutenant rode off highly elated over the fact that Colonel Guitar agreed with his views.

"Let them go," sputtered Harry. "They will be disgusted before night."

And so it proved. The trail led Guitar over hills, through ravines and rocky dells, through tangled forests, and twisted and turned, until it disappeared entirely; and, much to his disgust, Guitar found himself along in the afternoon within two miles from where he had started. The wily guerrilla chieftain had fooled him completely. Guitar led his mad, weary and swearing force back to the old camp grounds, and there awaited the return of Lawrence and his scouting party.

Lawrence did not think for a moment but that Harry was right, and that fact soon became evident. They were now in a more open country, and the signs that a large body of troops had passed became numerous. Not only this, but in the houses along the road they found a number of severely wounded that the guerrillas had been forced to leave.

After some miles they came to a road that crossed the one they were on, and which led to the west. Here the ground had been much trampled, and that but a short time before.

Again Harry dismounted and examined the ground carefully. "We are close onto them," he said. "I do not believe they have been gone half an hour."

"Harry, you are a regular Kit Carson for trails," laughed Lawrence. "Are you sure you are right?"

"Perfectly, and what is more, their force divided here, but the larger force kept on. The explanation is plain. Porter operates to the north and east, so he has kept on with the larger force; Poindexter and Cobb have their chief haunts along the Chariton and Grand, so with their forces they have gone to the west."

"We had better hurry back to Guitar and tell him this," exclaimed Lawrence.

"No," snapped Harry. "I don't propose to be snubbed again. You only have my word now. Let's keep on until you and everyone present have proof that cannot be doubted."

"I believe you are right, Harry," said Lawrence, and he gave the command to continue on.

They had proceeded a mile when Bruno came running back, showing by his manner he had news to impart.

Halting his squad, Lawrence dismounted, and taking Harry, they carefully made their way to the brow of a hill which lay in front. Cautiously peering over, they saw about a quarter of a mile ahead a commodious house, around which a number of horses were hitched.

It was evident that they had come on the rear guard of the retreating guerrillas, and that they had halted to rest, and were being well entertained, for a number of black women were passing back and forth from the house to a rude outdoor kitchen, all bearing dishes, and it looked very tempting to Lawrence and Harry.

"Feel like eating myself," whispered Harry. "I didn't know I was so hungry."

"How many do you reckon there are?" asked Lawrence.

Harry carefully counted the horses and then said, "Not over fifteen or twenty. I can count only fifteen horses, but there may be some out of sight."

"Feel like appropriating that dinner myself," said Lawrence.

"The boys would never forgive us if we didn't," answered Harry.

Hurrying back they explained the situation, and by unanimous vote it was decided to make a charge on that dinner without loss of time.

"Harry and I will ride a little ahead," said Lawrence. "Harry is dressed in homespun and my uniform is so dusty they won't be able to distinguish its color until we are close to them. Dan, when I give the signal, come on in a rush."

So Lawrence and Harry rode ahead, the squad some fifteen or twenty paces in the rear, leisurely following. Scarcely had they rode over the brow of the hill when two sentinels they had not seen before suddenly showed themselves on the road. The sentinels seemed much alarmed, and drew up their carbines as if to shoot.

Harry waved his hat and signaled they were friends. Seeing the squad coming so leisurely and the two in advance, the sentinels lowered their guns and waited, thinking it must be some of their own men. But when Lawrence and Harry were a few yards from them one of the sentinels caught the color of Lawrence's uniform.

Giving a terrific whoop, he raised his gun and fired, the ball just missing Lawrence's head. The other sentinel fired, but his shot went wild. Both wheeled their horses and dashed back, yelling, "Yanks! Yanks! Yanks!"

There was no need of Lawrence signaling Dan to come on, for the squad were urging their horses to the limit.

The guerrillas at dinner heard the firing and came pouring out of the house. Close on the heels of the flying sentinels thundered the Federals. The guerrillas took one look, and with cries of terror sprang for their horses, and cutting the halter straps were up and away. By this time the balls were falling among them thick and fast, killing two, and the horse of a third one fell and the rider was taken prisoner.

The fight was over and Lawrence rode up to the house, and was met on the porch by a white haired, fine looking old gentleman.

"Sorry to trouble you," said Lawrence, urbanely, "but with your permission I will have my men finish that dinner that your friends have so ungraciously and suddenly declined."

"Step right in, suh, the dinner is waiting," the old gentleman replied with a wan smile, "but my guests are not accustomed to invite themselves."

"Sorry, sir, but when you consider the improvement in the character of your guests, you should rejoice," rejoined Lawrence. "Entertaining such guests as have run away is dangerous."



"I shall feed no Yankees," cried a shrill voice, and a young lady flounced out of the door, her face red with anger.

Lawrence saw that she was good to look at, tall, willowy and fair of face. Taking off his hat and bowing politely, he said, "My dear lady, I humbly beg your pardon, but my men must certainly finish that dinner you so kindly prepared for those who were so impolite and cowardly as to run away and leave it. It would take more than Rebel bullets to make me decline a meal prepared by your fair hands."

The compliment was lost. "Cowardly?" cried the girl. "Is it cowardly for twenty to flee before a regiment of Yankee cut-throats?"

"There are only a dozen of us," said Lawrence, "and a dozen finer gentlemen you never entertained, every one a prince and as brave as a lion. If it were not so, twenty of your friends would not have fled from them."

The young lady flashed a look of scorn at him and cried, "Yankee cut-throats and robbers—gentlemen and brave! You amaze me." She abruptly turned and went into the house, and much to Lawrence's regret he did not see her again.

"You must excuse my daughter," said the old man, nervously.

"That's all right, so we get the dinner," answered Lawrence. "Don't you see my men are getting impatient?"

"Come right in. I feed you, not because I want to, but because I must." Thus speaking, he led them into the house, where they found a sumptuous repast but partly eaten; and not a man in the squad but did full justice to it.

Lawrence found the prisoner they had taken shaking with terror, for some of the men had coolly informed him that after dinner he was to be hanged.

Lawrence was about to reprimand the men for their cruel joke, when it occurred to him he might use the fellow's fears to some advantage. So he told him if he would tell all he knew, not only would his life be spared, but that he would be paroled, but he would have to be careful and tell nothing but the truth.

The prisoner eagerly embraced the opportunity, and confirmed what Harry had said. He moreover stated that before Porter and Poindexter parted they had agreed to gather up all the men they could, and join forces again somewhere along the line of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad.

"I guess that is straight enough for Guitar to believe, instead of that upstart lieutenant," said Harry.

Back to find Guitar the scouts rode; but it was night when they found him and then nearly where they had left him. All day his men had marched beneath a broiling sun, and when they found out how they had been led astray, against the protests of Harry, they wanted to lynch the smart lieutenant; and it was a long time before the poor fellow heard the last of it.

Colonel Guitar concluded to rest his men until morning, and then continue the pursuit. "I will chase Porter clear to the Iowa line, if necessary, to catch him," he said.

While it was arranged that Colonel Guitar should march straight for Mexico, Lawrence, with a detail of ten men dressed as guerrillas, was to follow directly on the trail of Porter, thus keeping track of his movements. Lawrence chose ten of the Merrill Horse to go with him.

One of the men in looking over the squad and noticing that with Lawrence, Dan, and Harry there were thirteen of them, demurred, saying that another man should be added, as thirteen was an unlucky number. "No thirteen for me," he said.

"Step aside," ordered Lawrence. "I want no thirteen cranks. I, for one, am not troubled over the old superstition of thirteen. Who will volunteer to take this fellow's place?"

A dozen were eager to go, and Lawrence chose a manly looking fellow. "Our timid friend here counted wrong," he said. "He forgot Bruno, and he is equal to a dozen men."

This raised a laugh, and the party started in the highest spirits. After going a short distance, Lawrence halted and made his men a short speech.

"Boys," he said, "dressed as we are, it will be certain death if we are captured. If circumstances arise where we must fight, fight to the death—never surrender. We are strong enough to beat off any small party, and large ones we must avoid. But remember, our object is to get information, not to fight. To all appearances we must be simon-pure guerrillas. If we meet with guerrillas, as no doubt we will, keep cool, and let Harry or me do the talking."

"All right, Captain," they shouted, and they rode merrily forward, careless of what dangers they might meet. So often had they faced death, they considered him an old acquaintance.

They found little trouble in following the trail of Porter. Taken for guerrillas, every Southern sympathizer was eager to give them all the information possible.

For two days they traveled, frequently meeting with small parties of guerrillas, and to these

Lawrence always represented they belonged south of the river, and had been obliged to cross to avoid a large party of Federals, and that they had concluded to keep on and join Porter.

By questioning, Lawrence found all of these parties had orders to join Porter at or near Paris. Some of these parties gave Lawrence a good deal of trouble by wanting to join forces with him, but he put them off by saying it would be safer to travel in small parties, as they would not then be so liable to attract the attention of the Federals.

Porter in his flight had crossed the North Missouri Railroad near Montgomery City, but in his haste did little damage.

It was after Lawrence had crossed this railroad that he had his first serious trouble. Here he came onto a company of at least fifty guerrillas under the command of Bill Duncan, a leader who often acted with Porter, and as noted for cruelty as he. The company was hastening to join Porter at Paris.

Lawrence thought it best to change his story. Duncan had roughly ordered him to join his company. This Lawrence firmly refused, saying they belonged to Poindexter's command; that after Poindexter and Porter had parted, Poindexter had found it impossible for him to join Porter, as he had promised, and that he had been sent post-haste by Poindexter to find Porter and inform him of the fact.

"But now," said Lawrence, "I need go no farther, as you can carry this information to Porter."

"Where are you going if I do this?" asked Duncan.

"Back to join Poindexter, as I promised," said Lawrence.

"I don't know but you are all right," said Duncan; "but I don't like the looks of your men. What did you say your name was?"

"I haven't told you, but it is Jack Hilton. Porter knows me well. Give him my respects. Be sure and tell him what I have told you, for it is very important. Good-day, Captain. Come on, boys," and Lawrence turned and rode back the way he had come.

Duncan watched them until they were out of sight; then, shaking his head, said: "I almost wish I hadn't let them go, but I reckon they're all right. That young chap in command told a mighty straight story."

About this time Lawrence was saying: "That was a mighty close shave, Dan. That fellow had a big notion to make trouble."

Bruno, who had been told to keep out of sight, joined them after they had gone some distance. He acted dejected and dispirited, and if he could have talked would have asked the meaning of it all. Time and time again he had given warning of the approach of guerrillas, only to have his master meet them as friends. He had given notice of the approach of Duncan's party, and to his surprise nothing had come of it. He was a thoroughly disgusted dog, and walked along with drooping head and tail; but it only took a word from Harry to set him all right again.

"We must turn north again at the first opportunity," said Lawrence. "This will put us back several miles."

They had not gone far before they met a solitary guerrilla. He was one of Duncan's party, and had gone out of his way to visit a friend. He was halted, and explained who he was.

"Ah, yes," said Lawrence; "your company is just ahead. We left it only a few moments ago."

"Whar be yo' goin'?" asked the fellow.

"Back to join Poindexter, where we belong. I was carrying a message to Porter from Poindexter, but on meeting Duncan I gave it to him, so we are on our way back."

The fellow had sharp eyes, and Lawrence noticed that he was scrutinizing his party closely, and when he saw Harry, who had been a little in the rear, and just now came up, he started perceptibly, but quickly recovered himself, and exclaimed, "I must be goin'." Putting spurs to his horse, he rode rapidly away.

Harry gazed on his retreating figure, his brow wrinkled in perplexity. Suddenly he cried: "Captain, I know that fellow, and I believe he recognized me. If he did, we are going to have trouble."

"Are you sure?" asked Lawrence, startled.

"Quite sure. I arrested him near Paris a couple of months ago, and he gave his parole. I had hard work to keep Bruno from throttling him. Where is Bruno?"

"There he comes now," said Lawrence, "and he seems to be greatly excited."

Bruno was indeed greatly excited, and he ran around Harry, growling, and then in the direction the fellow had taken, looking back to see if Harry was following.

"Bruno knows him, too," said Harry. "He never forgets. If that fellow saw Bruno, it is indeed all up. He will tell Duncan, and we will have a fight on our hands as sure as fate."

"By hard riding we can reach Mexico and avoid the fight," said Lawrence; "but I don't like the idea of running away."

"Nor I," said Harry. "Even if the fellow knew me, Duncan may not follow us."

"What do you think, Dan?" asked Lawrence.

Dan took a chew of tobacco, as he always did when about to decide anything weighty, and then slowly remarked: "Don't like to run until I see something to run from."

"That's it," cried Lawrence. "It is doubtful if Duncan follows us at all. If he does, it will be time enough to think of running."

It was therefore decided to take the first road they came to which led in the direction they wished to go. They soon came to the road, but before they turned into it, Lawrence took the precaution to make it appear that they had ridden straight on.

"Reckon Bruno and I will hang near this corner for a while," said Harry. "I want to make sure whether we are followed or not. I feel in my bones Duncan is after us."

Harry had good reasons for feeling as he did, for the guerrilla whose name was Josh Hicks, had not only recognized him, but he had also seen Bruno, and he bore the dog an undying hatred, for it was he who had captured him, and would have killed him had not Harry interfered.

No sooner was Hicks out of sight of the scouts than he put his horse to the utmost speed. "I have an account to settle with that dawg and his master," he muttered, "and it will be settled tonight or my name is not Josh Hicks."

He overtook Duncan's command, his horse covered with foam.

"Hello, Josh, what's up?" asked some of the men, as he dashed up. "Yo' un acts as if the Merrill Hoss was after yo'. What has skeered yo'?"

"Whar is Bill?" Hicks fairly shrieked.

"Up in front. What's the matter?" and the men began to look uneasy.

Seeing the excitement in the rear, Duncan came riding back. "What's the trouble?" he asked, gruffly.

"Don't know," answered one of the men, "but Josh Hicks has jest come up, his hoss covered with foam, and he seems mighty skeered about something."

Just then Hicks caught sight of Duncan, and yelled: "Bill, did yo' un meet a party of about a dozen men a few minutes ago?"

"Yes; what of it?"

"An' yo'un had them and let them go?" fairly screamed Hicks.

"Of course; they were Poindexter's men."

"Poindexter's men! Hell!" Hicks shouted. "They was Yanks in disguise, an' one of them was that damned boy scout of the Merrill Hoss. I know him, and I saw the dawg."

"Be you sure, Josh?" asked Duncan.

"Sure? Of course I'm sure. Don't I know the boy, and don't I know the dawg? Can I forgit the brute that had his teeth in my throat? Oh, yo' un be a nice one, yo' un be, Bill, to let them fellers slip through your fingers!"

Duncan flushed with anger and chagrin. "Look here, Josh," he roared, "none of your insinuations, or you settle with me. I never met that feller, and if you had been with us, as you ought to have been, instead of gallivanting around the country, you would have known them. Them fellers told a straight story, they did; but they'll never fool Bill Duncan but once. About face, boys."

In a moment more the guerrillas were thundering on the trail of the scouts. They had little difficulty until they came to the road where Lawrence had turned off. Here Duncan carefully examined the ground, and with the almost unerring instinct of his class, decided rightly as to the way the scouts had gone.

Harry had taken a position about half a mile from where the road turned, and where he had a good view without being seen. He saw the guerrillas stop and hesitate, and then take the right road.

"They are after us, sure," he muttered, and, spurring his horse, he did not pull rein until he had overtaken the scouts.

"They are close after us!" he exclaimed, pulling up his panting horse.

"It will soon be dark; we can elude them," said Lawrence.

"Let's fight them," said Dan, taking out his plug of tobacco and holding it until a decision was made.

"Yes, let's fight them," said the men. "This is the tamest scout we've ever been on—hobnobbing with the villains instead of fighting them."

"All right," replied Lawrence. "Let's ride rapidly ahead until dark. Dan, you and I must think up a bit of strategy in the meantime."

"All right," said Dan, biting off a big chew from the plug he was holding, and restoring the rest to his pocket. If the decision had been against a fight, Dan would have put the plug back without taking a chew. When Dan put his tobacco back unbitten, it was always an infallible sign that something had gone in a way that did not suit him.

That Lawrence and Dan had fixed up that bit of strategy was evident, for just as darkness was closing in, Lawrence ordered the scouts to stop long enough to gather a good feed of corn for their horses, from a near-by field. Then they rode on and camped in a wood, some little distance from the road.

"The guerrillas will not now attack us until some time in the night," he said, "thinking to surprise us."

He gave orders for the horses to be tethered a little distance in the rear of the camp, where they would be sheltered. "Hitch them so you can loose them in a twinkling, if it becomes necessary," he ordered.

Then he told the men they might build a fire, make some coffee, and roast some corn, if they wished.

"Had we not better dig a hole for the fire, and screen it with blankets?" suggested one of the men. "A light might give us away."

"Just what I want it to do," answered Lawrence, to the astonishment of all but Dan and Harry.

Lawrence then explained to his men his plan: "The guerrillas will attack us some time during the night, thinking to surprise us. I want the surprise the other way. Therefore I propose to camp as if we were unconscious of danger. The fire is to be left, not too bright, but smouldering enough to give a little light. Each man of you is to prepare a dummy. A log with a blanket around it will do. These will be placed in a row a short distance from the fire. In the dim light they will look exactly like a row of sleeping men. Last of all, we will fix a dummy sentinel, leaning against a tree as if asleep.

"We will all lie down a little to one side in the bush. Then, when the guerrillas charge on the supposed sleeping camp, give it to them. If things go wrong, each man make for his horse, and get away the best he can. Make for Mexico."

These instructions were obeyed implicitly, and soon the camp was buried in apparent slumber.

To make sure they were right, the guerrillas had inquired at the first house they passed, and were told that a small party of men had passed but a short time before.

"We are on the right track, boys," exclaimed Duncan, gleefully, "and if they don't take the alarm and dodge us in the dark, they are ours. We must not press them too closely. Let them go into camp, and we will get them when they are asleep."

Just as darkness began to fall, Duncan became fearful that the scouts would not halt, but keep on for Mexico, and he gave orders to gallop, but concluded to stop at the first house and inquire. He did so, and an old man came to the door, and in answer to his inquiry replied that a party whom he supposed to be guerrillas passed just before dark. "Confound them!" he exclaimed, "they stopped at my cornfield and gathered a good feed for their horses, and never said even 'Thank you.' They are camped in the woods about half a mile ahead, for I saw the gleam of the campfire. I am going down in the morning, and see if I can't collect for that corn."

"We will collect it for you," chuckled Duncan, "and while we are about it we will collect enough to pay for a feed for our horses. There are sixty or seventy of us. Them fellers are not our men; they are Yanks."

"Good land!" exclaimed the old fellow.

"Don't worry—we'll collect for that corn, all right," said Duncan.

The guerrillas waited until ten o'clock, then approached the wood as near as they dared, and Duncan sent two of his men ahead to spy upon the camp. They were gone so long that Duncan began to be impatient, but at last they returned, and their report was all that could be wished.

"We almost crept on them before we discovered them," said one. "The fools do not seem suspicious of any danger. They have but one man on guard, and sure as shooting he is leaning against a tree, sound asleep. It will be no trick to send them to the devil as they sleep."

"And to the devil we will send them," growled Duncan. "Understand, no quarter."

"The dawg? Didn't you see the dawg?" asked Hicks, anxiously.

"That dawg seems to trouble you, Hicks," sneered one of the men.

"He would trouble yo' un if yo' un had had the experience I have," retorted Hicks. "I tell you I

don't like it. Them Yanks seem too blame careless. It ain't like them. An' that dawg—didn't he make no fuss when yo' un crept up?"

"Not a bit. If thar was any dawg, he must have been asleep, too."

"I tell yo' un I don't like it. Thar is something wrong. That dawg——"

"Shut up," commanded Duncan. "Josh, if you are afraid of a dawg, stay with the hosses. Some of the boys will have to stay, and there is not one, unless it is you, but wants a hand in this job."

"Yes, stay, Josh, stay!" jeered the men. "Josh is getting skeery. He is afraid of a dawg."

"Stay nothin'!" snorted Josh, mad as a hornet. "An' if any of yo' uns insinuates I am afraid, yo' uns will have to settle with Josh Hicks, an' that mighty quick."

"No quarrelling, boys," commanded Duncan. "Josh is all right. Don't want to stay with the hosses, Josh?"

"Not by a thundering sight."

"All right, Josh, we will give you the first crack at that boy, the owner of the dawg, to settle old scores."

They were to creep up on the scouts and kill them as they slept. If an alarm was given, they were to rush on them and make quick work of it.

Slowly the guerrillas worked their way through the wood, as noiselessly and stealthily as Indians. By the dim light of the campfire they saw what they supposed were the sleeping forms of their enemies. The sentinel stood leaning against a tree, his head on his breast, apparently sound asleep.

The sentinel was right in front of Josh Hicks. He drew a huge knife, his eyes gleaming with hate and cruelty. Nearer and nearer he crept, then sprang forward and buried his knife in the bosom of the supposed man, but instead of striking flesh and bone, he struck a log of wood, and so fierce was the blow he could not withdraw the knife.

As he struck there was a hoarse growl, a huge form shot through the air, and the teeth of Bruno were buried in his throat. He gave a blood-curdling yell, which died away in a sickening gurgle.

The guerrillas, thinking themselves discovered, rushed upon the sleeping forms. As they came into the light, the woods to the right and left burst into flame. Men reeled and, clutching the air, fell. The wood resounded with horrid curses, groans, and yells of terror.

Firing a random volley, those that lived turned and fled, pursued by the scouts. The battle was soon over. A full third of the attacking force lay on the ground, dead or grievously wounded. But of all the dead, there was none so ghastly as Josh Hicks. He lay with his throat torn in shreds, and on his face there was still a look of mortal terror.

The next morning, when the guerrillas came creeping back to bury their dead and care for the wounded, a feeling of superstitious awe crept over them when they saw the body of Josh Hicks.

"That dawg—that dawg!" they whispered. "Poor Josh! He must have had a presentiment."

From that time on Bruno was to them an uncanny beast, in league with evil spirits.

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## CHAPTER VI

### KIRKSVILLE

No sooner had the affrighted cries of the guerrillas died away, than Lawrence, calling back his men, said: "We must now be up and away. By morning the guerrillas will be over their fright, and we will be surrounded. Let the dead and wounded lie, though make the wounded as comfortable as possible. It will not be long before some of their comrades will be creeping back to care for them."

To Lawrence's delight, he found that not a single one of his men had been harmed. In the highest of spirits, the men mounted their horses and rode away.

All night they rode and, when morning came, they halted by a field of corn, and once more gave their horses a fine feed, while the men made coffee and feasted on roasting ears.

"Boys, which shall it be—Mexico or Paris?" asked Lawrence. "From what we learned from Duncan, it is the intention of Porter to unite all his force near Paris, and then move north. Guitar must be in Mexico by this time, but there will be no fighting there. No doubt he will keep on to Paris."

"To Paris!" shouted the men. "Let's go where the fighting will be. Our horses are quite fresh. We can be there by night."

"What if we run into Porter and his whole gang?" asked Lawrence, smiling.

"Lick the whole gang!" they yelled.

"You're all right, boys, but I hardly think you can do that; at least, we won't try as long as I'm leader," laughed Lawrence.

The day was hot and the roads dusty, and Lawrence favored the horses all possible, but they made good progress. Taken for guerrillas by the inhabitants, they fared well, and much information was given them.

Much to Lawrence's surprise, he learned that Porter had taken and sacked Paris the day before, and that McNeil had moved down from Palmyra and driven him out. More serious still was the news that Porter had been reinforced, and had attacked and expected to recapture the place.

This was news, indeed. If true, Porter was squarely between them and Paris. A consultation was held, and it was the unanimous opinion that they should keep on and join McNeil, if they could.

As they neared Paris, they heard firing, and became aware a slight skirmish was in progress. They halted, and while debating what best to do, a couple of guerrillas came riding towards them.

"Who be yo' un?" they asked of Lawrence, as they rode up.

"We 'uns are from Galloway County, on our way to join Porter," answered Lawrence. "I heah fightin'. What is it?"

"Oh, a few of us are only amusing the Yanks while Porter gits away," said the men.

"Then Porter is not heah?"

"No; he an' most of his men air miles north by this time. He left about a hundred of us here to make believe we 'uns ware goin' to attack Paris, so to give him time to git away. Thar, yo' uns don't hear any shooting now. The boys have amused the Yanks as long as they wanted to, and now air on their way to jine Porter, and bet your life the Yanks don't catch them."

"What are you doing here, away from your command?" asked Lawrence, sternly.

The guerrillas started at the change in the speech and manner of Lawrence. "We 'uns," they stammered, "we 'uns live about five miles back, and we 'uns was goin' to see the folks. We 'uns can easily overtake the boys by riding all night."

A sign from Lawrence, and, to the amazement of the guerrillas, they were looking into the muzzles of revolvers.

"It's all up with you, fellows," said Lawrence. "We are Yanks. Boys, disarm them."

The guerrillas' faces were as white as chalk, and they began to beg for their lives. They had only just joined Porter, they declared, and they were sick of it already. They had never molested a Union man. In fact, they had told a lie—they were deserting, instead of going to visit their families, as they said.

"If that is the case," said Lawrence, "you will readily give us all the information you can. No doubt Colonel McNeil will be pleased to see you; so come along."

It was as the prisoners had said—the guerrillas had gone, and Lawrence had no trouble in riding into Paris, where he was gladly welcomed by McNeil, who had been in fear he was being attacked by an overwhelming force. It was welcome news that Lawrence brought, that Colonel Guitar was in Mexico by this time, with five hundred good men; but that Porter was retreating north, was a big surprise to McNeil.

"He must have at least a thousand men," said McNeil. "I thought he would stay and fight this time, sure. I see we will have to chase the fox."

During the night the advance of Colonel Guitar's column came in. Guitar had been taken sick at Mexico, but had sent forward five hundred men under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Shaffer.

McNeil, his force now augmented by Shaffer's, resolved to push Porter to the limit, and if possible bring him to battle.

A pursuit now commenced which lasted a week—a pursuit that every soldier that was present will always remember. Men grew haggard for want of sleep; horses staggered under the weight of their riders, and then fell dying by the side of the road. Across prairies and streams, through woods and tangled thickets, over rocky hills, almost inaccessible, the pursuit led. By every art known to the wily Porter did he try to mislead his pursuers; but they hung on to his trail like grim death.

More than once would the pursuers have been at fault had it not been for Lawrence and his little band of scouts. Hanging on to the flank and at times almost ahead of Porter, they were enabled to keep McNeil well posted as to the movements of his foes.

More than once did the faithful Bruno keep the scouts from falling into ambushes, and more

than once shots were fired at him by the vengeful guerrillas. But Bruno had become as cunning and wary as a fox in keeping out of danger. It was but a glimpse the guerrillas could get at him as he stole through the woods.

"What now, Bruno? What's the matter?" asked Lawrence one day, as the dog came rushing back in the greatest excitement. The scouts were in advance, and had been following the trail through a rough and broken country.

The dog gave a short bark, and looked to the front, as if to say, "Look out—trouble ahead."

Lawrence gave the order to halt, and told Harry and another of the company to dismount and steal carefully through the woods, and see what they could discover. They did so, and soon came to a stream. The bridge that spanned it had, to Harry's astonishment, been only partially destroyed; it could easily be crossed. This looked suspicious. The other bank of the stream was covered by a thick growth of bushes. Their leaves rustled gently as they were touched by the breeze, and that was all. There was no sign of life. Bruno, as he looked across the stream, gave a low, menacing growl, and his eyes shone like two coals of fire. The road, after crossing the bridge, was narrow, and ran between two hills, both thickly wooded.

"There's something over there in the bushes," whispered Harry. "We'd better go back and report to the Captain."

They did so.

"We'll wait until some of the command come up," said Lawrence.

They had not long to wait. A company of Merrill Horse that was leading the advance came in sight. To the Captain in command Lawrence explained his fear of an ambush in front. The company was halted, the men dismounted, and a skirmish line formed. The men were instructed to work their way carefully to the bank of the stream, but not to show themselves.

"I see nothing alarming over there," said the Captain of the company, as he swept the other side of the stream with his glass.

"There is something," said Lawrence. "I have just seen a bush tremble more than if stirred by the wind. That half-destroyed bridge is but a trap."

By this time more of the troop had come up, and had been halted. With them were a couple of pieces of artillery.

"We are losing valuable time," grumbled the Captain. "We'd better ride on, before McNeil gives us thunder."

"Not if I can prevent it," said Lawrence. "Bring up that artillery."

The two pieces were brought as close to the river as they could without being seen. The horses were then unhitched, and the pieces run forward by hand, so that a few yards more would bring them into view, and in a position where they could sweep the bushes on both sides of the road across the stream.

"Load with canister," ordered Lawrence. "When all is ready, I will order a volley fired across the river into the bushes. Wait for the returning volley, for I am sure it will come; then run up your pieces and sweep both sides of the road."

The skirmishers crept carefully forward, and at the word poured a volley into the bushes across the stream. The effect was electrical. The bushes seemed to burst into smoke and flame, and then came a crashing volley in return. Quick as thought, the two cannon were run forward and a storm of canister swept the bushes. There were howls of rage, curses and groans, and the guerrillas were in wild flight.

With cheers the men ran back, mounted their horses and started in pursuit, thinking the time had come for them to annihilate Porter and his gang.

Porter had planned well. A short distance from the bridge the road passed through a narrow, rocky defile, and this was so obstructed that it took two hours to remove the obstructions so the command could pass through. Porter had left his horses on the other side of the obstruction, so when his men broke all they had to do was to make their way to their horses.

Porter did not try any more ambushes. His only thought was to elude his pursuers and get away. He came nearly doing it, and for a day McNeil was in doubt as to which way he had gone—to the northwest or the north.

It was Lawrence and his scouts who brought the news. His report was: "Porter crossed the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad last night at Shelbina. He is said to be making for Kirksville, where he expects to be joined by the guerrilla bands of northwestern Missouri. His force is estimated at two thousand, which, I think, is an overestimate, but as he goes north, it is hourly increasing."

"I don't care whether he has two thousand or five thousand; I am going to catch him and make him fight," said McNeil, grimly. The pursuit was once more taken up, the column headed for Kirksville.

There is only one county in Missouri north of the county in which Kirksville is situated. It was as far north as Porter could hope to go without being surrounded by enemies. Full of hope that he would be forced to give battle at Kirksville, McNeil pressed on.

So rapid was the pursuit that McNeil, as he neared Kirksville, could not bring over five hundred men into action. His trains and his men with broken-down horses had been left behind. All along the route Porter's force had been reported as fully three thousand, but three thousand did not alarm McNeil, who had faith in his little army.

As the Federals approached Kirksville, Lawrence, who had been scouting, reported that Kirksville had been occupied by Porter, and that he had expelled the entire inhabitants of the place. His horses he had concealed in the brush west of the town.

"These facts," said Lawrence, "I have learned from the three prisoners I have here."

McNeil questioned the prisoners, but they were surly and would say nothing. The facts that Lawrence had learned were told him when they believed him to be one of their number. When undeceived and told to surrender, their surprise was only equalled by their chagrin.

In bringing them back, Lawrence noticed one of the prisoners stealthily throw away some papers. They were secured and found to be a parole and an oath of allegiance to the National Government.

"I'm sorry," said Lawrence, "but this fact must be reported to Colonel McNeil."<sup>[3]</sup>

It was a beautiful August morning when McNeil's little army reached the outskirts of the village of Kirksville. To all appearances, they gazed upon a deserted town. If the angel of death had passed over the place and had smitten every man, woman and child, it could not have been more silent, death-like. The hot sun beat down upon the streets and houses, but awoke no life. The stillness was unearthly, appalling. What did it mean?

"Can it be that Porter has slipped away without our knowing it?" asked McNeil.

"Impossible," answered Lawrence. "The whole guerrilla force is concealed in the stores and houses. They are hoping we will think the place unoccupied; then as we ride through the streets they can open fire and slaughter us without mercy."

"How can we find out where they are?" asked McNeil, rather anxiously.

Lawrence thought a moment, and then said: "Colonel, give me a few men and I will make a dash down the main street, and around the square. If they are hidden, we will surely draw their fire, and thus reveal their position."

McNeil looked at Lawrence in amazement. "Do you mean it?" he asked.

"I certainly do."

"Why, it would mean almost certain death—suicide."

"I am willing to try."

McNeil thought a moment and then said: "Captain, you must not do it. If you were one of my officers, I might consent; but with you it is different. You are on special duty from General Schofield. It is true you have acted as one of my aids, and as leader of my scouts, for which I am grateful. But for you to lead such a forlorn hope, I cannot—will not—permit such a sacrifice on your part."

Colonel Shaffer, of the Merrill Horse, who had been present during the conversation, now said: "Colonel, you are right. To permit Captain Middleton to do what he proposes would be a reflection on our command; especially would I consider it so on the Merrill Horse. I will make a detail, and lead the forlorn hope myself."

"No, you will not," cried three or four officers of his regiment, who had come up in time to hear his proposal. "Our Colonel leading as desperate an undertaking as that, and we looking on! Why, every mother's son of us should be shot for cowardice. Detail one of us."

Shaffer looked upon his officers with pride. "It is just what I might have expected," he exclaimed, his voice trembling. "Lieutenant Coudrey, you spoke first. You may go if you wish; but mind, I don't order you."

Coudrey saluted and said: "Colonel, I thank you. I need no order."

"How many men will you need, Lieutenant?" asked Shaffer.

"Eight, I think, will be enough. I do not wish to expose more than necessary."

Lieutenant Coudrey returned to his company, explained to them what was to be done, and added: "Not one that comes with me may ever come back. I want eight volunteers."

He looked up and down the line. For a moment there was not a sound. The men gazed into each others' faces blankly; and then, as if by common impulse, the whole company rode forward.

"God bless you, my men, my brave boys! I might have known it, but I cannot take you all. The first eight will do. That will save me choosing man by man."



History tells of great charges. Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, and Hood's at Franklin, will live as long as American history is written; but history tells nothing of these small affairs. Yet who will say that Lieutenant Coudrey and his eight men did not perform a braver deed than do men who, in the heat of battle, rush up to the mouth of the cannon? It is the individual bravery, the scout and the skirmish, which make the romance of war.

All was ready, and as they started a thousand eyes followed them, and with bated breath their comrades watched them as they rode. Each carried a heavy revolver, that they might return the fire they would receive.

Down the street they rode at full speed, but not a shot was fired; the town lay still as dead. They reached the square. "Is it possible——" exclaimed McNeil, but his speech was cut short. As the little squad turned to ride around the square, flashes of fire and little clouds of smoke burst from doors and windows of stores and houses. The village had suddenly come to life.



**Down the street they rode at full speed.**

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From their revolvers Coudrey and his men returned the fire as they rode. A horse goes down, then another. A man throws up his arms and tumbles headlong, but those that live dash on. The circuit is made, the hell of fire passed through, and the enemy is located.

Coudrey, his face blackened with smoke, and his eyes blazing with the light of battle, came riding back. His hand was grasped by both McNeil and Shaffer. Neither could speak for a moment, and then they could only gasp: "Thank God!"

Strange as it may seem, Lieutenant Coudrey had passed through the fiery ordeal unscathed; but of the eight men who rode with him, two were killed, three more wounded, and five of the eight horses lay dead.

The position of the enemy uncovered, McNeil dismounted his force, and the battle was opened. From house to house the men forced their way, and at the end of two hours the enemy were in full flight. The artillery of the Federals played an important part in the action, and did much towards turning the victory. Porter had at least three or four men to one in this action, but his force was poorly disciplined, and stood little show against the seasoned veterans of McNeil.<sup>[4]</sup>

The routed guerrillas took refuge in the timber which skirted the Chariton, but early the next morning the Merrill Horse was after them.

The next day Porter was caught at Stockton and completely routed, losing nearly a hundred men. Porter himself barely escaped, but with a few followers he made his way back to his old haunts, and a couple of months later was the cause of one of the most lamentable tragedies enacted in Missouri during the war.

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## CHAPTER VII

### POINDEXTER CAPTURED

Hundreds of the guerrillas who had been with Porter worked their way south to join Poindexter, and that chieftain found himself at the head of a force of from a thousand to fifteen hundred men. That part of Porter's force that had joined Poindexter had been closely followed by a portion of McNeil's force, among them a hundred of the Merrill Horse. With them came Lawrence and Harry with Bruno.

When they reached Mexico, Lawrence found a dispatch waiting him from General Schofield, which filled him with amazement. It stated that he had received a communication, apparently from the same hand that had sent the first communication to him (Lawrence), in May, which revealed the plot of the partisan uprising. This communication stated that a large body of troops was moving up from Arkansas to cooperate with the guerrillas, the object being to capture Independence and Lexington, and that the movement was a month later than expected, but now it was well under way.

"I am not satisfied," wrote General Schofield, "with the way the officers in that district are meeting the emergency, and I want you to go there immediately and report to me the full situation."

Lawrence reluctantly bade Harry and Bruno good-bye, and he and Dan started for their new field of work, where we will leave them for a time, and follow the adventures of Harry.

Poindexter and Cobb had now come back into the territory that was commanded by Colonel Guitar. That officer had fully recovered from his sickness, and, hastily collecting a force of five hundred men, he started in pursuit of Poindexter.

Harry and his dog were now so well known that Guitar placed him in command of a small body of scouts. They were dressed as guerrillas, and they certainly looked and acted the part.

Poindexter had expected to join Porter in his retreat north, at or near Kirksville, but he had been attacked and driven back by a force under General Ben Loan, thus preventing the union which Porter and Poindexter had planned.

Poindexter was now hiding in the woods and thickets along the Chariton, and numerous guerrilla bands were flocking to his standard.

It was Colonel Guitar's business to find him and scatter his forces before they became too strong; and to find him Guitar could employ no better means than Harry and Bruno.

For his companions, Harry had chosen five boys, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty, all native Missourians, skilled in woodcraft, accustomed to firearms, and all burning to avenge themselves on the guerrillas, for all had suffered terrible wrongs at their hands.

Just as Harry was about to start on his scout, a boy by the name of Jack Harwood came to him and begged to be allowed to be one of the party. He was about eighteen years of age, of slender build, but as wiry and active as a cat. His face bore a rather sad expression, for his father had been shot down in cold blood by some of Porter's gang; the house had been burned over his mother's head, and she had died a few days later from shock and exposure. Fortunately for Jack, he was not at home at the time, or he would have shared his father's fate.

Jack buried his mother, bade farewell to his ruined home, and enlisted. He seemed never to tire, and was never as happy as when he was hunting guerrillas. He was brave to recklessness, and early in the service had been promoted to a sergeancy in his company.

Harry looked him over and told him he would see what he could do. The eyes of the boy glowed with a fierce flame as he told Harry of his wrongs. It was so much like his own story that Harry's heart went out towards him.

Colonel Guitar readily granted Harry's request that Harwood might be added to his force, and so Harry found himself at the head of six young, adventuresome and daring scouts.

Harry's orders were to locate Poindexter, but keep in touch with the column as much as possible.

No sooner were they away from the command than Harry halted and said: "Boys, I must make you acquainted with Bruno, so he may make no mistake."

The great dog was called, and he came and stood before his master, wagging his tail and looking up in his eyes, as if to say, "What is it?"

"Bruno, this is Jack Harwood. He is all right."

Bruno smelled Jack, gave a short yelp and, lifting one of his paws, offered it to him. The boy shook it with wonder and delight.

Bruno was then introduced to each of the scouts, and they seemed to pass muster, for to each one he offered his paw.

"Good," exclaimed Harry. "Bruno will now know any one of you among thousands, and you will

find him the most valuable member of the squad."

Harry rode to the northwest, for he knew it was in that direction Poindexter was rallying his forces. The country through which they passed seemed to be terror-stricken. But few men were seen, and they were old. The women gazed at them with scared eyes as they passed, and little children would run and hide, or peer at them around the corners of the houses with frightened faces.

To questions asked, both men and women were noncommittal. They knew nothing. They were the first guerrillas they had seen for days. As for Yankee soldiers, they knew of none nearer than the towns where they were garrisoned.

Towards evening Bruno gave warning of foes ahead. Soon a party of ten men rode in sight, manifestly guerrillas.

"Let me do the talking, boys," Harry said, "but be sure and sanction everything I say; and be ready to fight at the word, if necessary. For your life, don't let them get the drop on you. At the first suspicious action, draw and fire."

The scouts did not seem loath to have a little skirmish. They loosened the revolvers in their holsters, and remarked they were ready.

"Bruno," said Harry, "I don't want them to see you. Go and hide, and don't come till I whistle."

The dog slunk into the woods that grew along the road, and in a twinkling was out of sight. The scouts marvelled. "Why, he is human," said one.

"Almost, but not quite, about some things," answered Harry.

The band of guerrillas had seen them, and halted, and were scanning them carefully, as if debating whether to advance or not.

"They seem to be a little afraid," laughed Harry. "Let's ride leisurely forward, as if satisfied."

As they approached, the guerrillas made a movement as if to raise their guns, but evidently thought better of it, and sat still to await their coming, but with hands on the butts of their revolvers.

"Hello, boys; whar yo' uns goin'?" called out Harry, as he came up. "The way yo' uns act, yo' uns must think we' uns air Yanks."

"Who be yo' uns, an' whar be yo' uns goin'?" the leader asked, scowling.

"We' uns? We' uns air from Franklin County. We' uns was a little too close to St. Louis to be healthy for sich fellers as we' uns, so we reckoned we' uns would come over and join Poindexter. Do yo' uns know whar we' uns can find him?"

"Don't know an' don't care," growled the leader. "Yo' uns had better come with we' uns. Had enough of stand-up fightin'! We' uns was with Porter at Kirksville, and got hell kicked out of us."

Harry now learned that they were a part of Porter's band; that after his last defeat Porter had advised his men to break into small parties and make their way back to their old haunts, where they could rally if he needed them. They could be nice, peaceable citizens until he wanted them again. It was more fun harassing and robbing Union men and surprising small parties of Yanks than it was to face the enemy in an open battle.

"I tell yo' uns," added the leader, shrugging his shoulders, "it's no fun facing them rotten balls. They skeer a feller."

"Why didn't yo' uns lick 'em?" asked Harry.

"Lick 'em? Say, young feller, Did yo' un ever face the Merrill Hoss?"

"No; but the boys heah reckon they would like to have the chance."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the guerrillas. "Wall, go on and join Poindexter, an' yo' uns may have a chance. See how you like it after the Merrill Hoss gits a whack at yo' uns," and, laughing and jesting, they rode on.

When the guerrillas were first met, Jack Harwood gave a start of surprise, and a look of fierce passion swept over his face. He suddenly pulled his slouch hat down so as to hide his features, turned and kept as far away as he could without exciting suspicion.

When the guerrillas had gone, he rode up to Harry, his eyes blazing, and his whole body trembling with suppressed excitement.

"I know two of those fellows," he exclaimed, "They were with the gang that murdered father. One of them was the one that fired the house. Mother knew them. There were six of them, and I know every one. I have sworn to get the whole six, and I will if I live."

The look of hatred on his face made Harry shiver, but he knew how he felt; so had he felt when he saw his father lying dead before him.

"I had all I could do to keep from shooting them while they were talking to you," continued Jack.

"It makes me feel like a coward to let such a chance go."

"It would have been madness, Jack. Then, we are not out to fight if we can avoid it, but to get information. Never let your passion lead you to do a foolish thing."

Jack said no more, but fell back in the rear.

It was almost night, and Harry decided to go into camp, as he had not learned the exact whereabouts of Poindexter.

Suddenly some one asked, "Where is Jack Harwood?"

Harry looked. He was nowhere to be seen.

"Does any one know anything about him?" he asked, anxiously.

One of the men said: "Jack stopped just after the guerrillas left us. He said the girth of his saddle was loose, and he would have to fix it. I thought no more about him, and as I have been riding in front, I did not notice he was not with us."

Could Jack have been captured by lurking guerrillas? They would go back and see. It would not do to leave a comrade in peril. If Jack had been captured, Bruno would have little trouble in following the trail. It was not more than two miles back to the place where the soldier had seen Jack dismount to fix his saddle girth, but there was no sign of a struggle there; no evidence that any guerrilla had been lying in ambush. But by the side of the road there were tracks of where a horse had been turned and ridden back.

"By heavens!" exclaimed one of the men, "Jack has deserted. Don't you remember one of those guerrillas said they lived in Ralls County?—and Jack is from Ralls."

The other men began to swear. "If we ever catch him," they muttered, with clenched fists.

"Hold on, boys," ejaculated Harry; "Jack has not deserted, but he has gone, and gone alone, on one of the maddest adventures that ever single man set out to do."

Then he told them of what Jack had said, and added: "No doubt he has gone back to try and get those men."

"Let's go back and try to help him!" exclaimed the squad in unison.

Harry shook his head. "No, boys," he said; "and if you wish to continue with me, you must promise me that you will not leave under any conditions whatever, without my consent. We are soldiers. We are under orders, and those orders are to find Poindexter. To try and find Jack would lead us we know not where, and bring the whole object of our scout to naught."

The men saw, and turned back; but with heavy hearts, for their thoughts were with Jack.

The scouts went into camp not far from a substantial farmhouse, and the occupants were a little more communicative than common, especially when Harry told them to set up a good meal for them, and he would pay for it, saying they had captured some Yankee money.

Their mouths being open, Harry found they had a son with Poindexter, and he had left home only that morning. They had heard the son say Poindexter was preparing to attack some place. They thought it was Columbia, but were not sure.

Harry made his camp in the edge of a wood, a field in front. A rough road ran through the wood, a short distance in the rear. If danger came, it would be by that road that Harry calculated to retreat. They were to rest till three o'clock, then up and away. Harry knew that with Bruno on guard there would be no surprise, but he could not rest. He was thinking of Jack Harwood.

About eleven o'clock, to Harry's surprise, Harwood made his appearance. "If it hadn't been for Bruno," he said, "I would never have found you. He met me down the road a ways, and guided me here."

"Where have you been?" asked Harry.

"Where have I been?" he answered, slowly. "On private business. I will tell you about it in the morning."

"You must promise never again to leave without permission, or this is your last scout with me," said Harry, sternly.

Jack did not answer. He turned to care for his horse.

When Jack stopped, under the pretence of fixing the girth of his saddle, it was with the fixed purpose, come what would, of following those guerrillas and killing the men who had helped murder his father. Had he not taken a solemn oath to kill them on sight? He did not stop to think how he could accomplish his purpose—of the danger of the undertaking. He only knew he had seen the men; that was enough. He would track them, if necessary, to the ends of the earth. As it was, fate favored him.

The guerrillas, all unconscious that Nemesis was on their track, rode on until dusk, when they stopped at a fine plantation, and roughly ordered supper and feed for their horses.

Mr. Rice, the owner of the plantation, was a hot Southern sympathizer, but he did not relish his present company. He felt like kicking them out of doors, but he knew it would not do to refuse them, so he made the best of it, and ordered supper prepared.

It was a good supper, and, in the highest of spirits, nine of the guerrillas sat down; the tenth was on guard. But he did not notice a silent figure creeping up to the window of the room in which the rest were dining.

Suddenly there was a sharp report, a crash of glass, and one of the diners sprang to his feet and fell backward, shot through the brain. At the same time a voice rang through the room. "Remember Thomas Harwood, Number One. Let the other five beware!"

At the sound of the shot and the fall of their comrade, the other guerrillas sat as if stunned for a moment; then with cries of terror they rushed from the house, thinking a Yankee force was on them; but a single shot, and excited cries from the sentinel, were all that they heard.

Before the attack, the sentinel had seen or heard nothing, but afterwards he had caught a glimpse of a dim figure fleeing up the road. He had fired, but there was no response to his shot.

When told what the voice had said, he turned pale and trembled. "My God!" he exclaimed, "it must have been Jack Harwood, Tom Harwood's son. There were six of us who put a quietus on that old Abolitionist. I heard the boy took a terrible oath he would never rest until he got the whole six. After that we lay for the boy, but he gave us the slip and went in the Yankee army. So, poor Ben is done for. He was one of the six. My being on guard is all that saved me. But whar did the boy come from? How did he know we' uns was heah?"

This question greatly puzzled the guerrillas, until one of them spoke: "I reckon them seven fellers we' uns met was Yanks. That Harwood boy must have been one of them. He saw you two fellers, and follered we' uns heah, and got poor Ben."

"Boys, I'll never feel easy as long as Jack Harwood lives," said the one who had escaped. "That boy is a devil. That's nine of us—only seven of them. Let's turn back and take them by surprise. We' uns can shoot them up."

It was agreed to, and so the guerrillas turned back.

After the return of Jack, Harry had lain down for a time, but could not sleep. He knew something had happened, but could not imagine what it was. Surely, Jack had not engaged the guerrillas single-handed. But he would have to wait until morning to know. Just as he was sinking into sleep, Bruno caught him by the shoulder and shook him. He was on his feet in a second.

Everything seemed quiet, and the guard said he had heard nothing, but Bruno showed by his actions everything was not right.

"Arouse the boys," said Harry; "something is in the wind."

The scouts were aroused, but nothing could be discovered. Everything seemed quiet and asleep.

"Jeffreys," said Harry to one of the men, "creep down towards the house and see if any mischief is going on down there. Be careful; keep in the shadow of the fence, and get back as quickly as possible."

Jeffreys was gone nearly half an hour and Harry was beginning to get alarmed, when he came back. He had a startling story to tell. He had crept up nearly to the house and found the yard full of men and horses. The nine guerrillas had come back and stopped at the house to make inquiries.

"The villain who lives there," continued Jeffreys, "told them all about where we were camped and the best way to surprise us. They were making arrangements to creep up on us when I thought it time to come back. I heard them talk of some one of our number who had killed one of their men. What did they mean?"

"Never mind now," answered Harry. "Let's get ready to give them a warm reception. We know just how many there are, and they are the ones who will be surprised."

It was a warm reception they got. Harry let them come almost up to them before he gave the signal to fire. First the carbines, then the revolver, had been his order.

In a minute all was over. Stunned by the reception they received, those who had not been killed or wounded beat a hasty retreat. Investigation showed three of the guerrillas dead and three more desperately wounded. The wounded were carried to the farmhouse to be cared for.

Among the dead was the one who had stood guard. Jack gazed at him a moment in silence and then muttered, "Number Two, but who killed him?"

Jack now told Harry how he had followed the guerrillas and shot one.

Harry listened in silence and then said, "Jack, I know how you feel. I once felt the same way, until Captain Middleton taught me better. He says this is a war of principles, not against individuals. That it is simply murder to kill for private wrongs."

"Wrong to kill guerrillas?" asked Jack in surprise.

"Yes, the way you did. In killing Ben Storms you had no idea of aiding the great cause for which we are fighting. You did it for revenge. In doing it you put yourself on the same plane as the man you killed."

"Why, you have just helped me in killing several. What's the difference?" asked Jack in astonishment.

"We killed those men in battle, and to save our own lives. The difference is great. If I had cruelly killed those wounded men instead of taking them to the house to be cared for, that would have been murder, not warfare."

A thought came to Harry and he asked, "Jack, if that other man who helped kill your father had been only wounded and not killed, what would you have done?"

Jack hung his head and whispered, "Killed him."

"I thought so, I would have done the same to a man who helped kill my father if it had not been for Captain Middleton. I have learned better, and now thank him for it. Jack, promise me you will never leave the command again without my permission."

Jack made the promise, but was rather doubtful as to the expediency of sparing the life of a guerrilla guilty of murder.

Owing to the fight it was well along in the morning before the scouts started. They had not gone over two miles before they met a man riding rapidly. To him they told the story of going to join Poindexter.

"Better go to Switzler's Mill," he said. "Poindexter starts for there this morning. I left him not over six hours ago. I'm on my way to try and rally some of Porter's men to come to his assistance."

"Is that so?" dryly answered Harry. "You had better come with us. You are just the man we've been looking for." And to the fellow's amazement, he found himself a prisoner.

"Now, boys," cried Harry, gleefully, "back to Guitar, I've found out all I want to know."

Horse flesh was not spared, and Guitar was found about noon, his column on the march. To him Harry told the news, and with all speed the head of the column was turned towards Switzler's Mill.

Now commenced a chase that lasted for seven days and did not end until the command had ridden two hundred and fifty miles over the roughest of roads.

Poindexter turned and twisted like a fox. There was no fight in his men; they ran like a pack of frightened coyotes at the first crack of a gun.

Guitar struck him at Switzler's Mill and scattered his force like chaff. Hot on Poindexter's trail the tireless troopers clung. Horses suffered more than the men. Scores fell by the roadside and died of exhaustion.

At Little Compton Poindexter was once more brought to bay, and, scarcely firing a shot; he fled, leaving behind his trains, most of his ammunition, several hundred stands of arms, and five hundred horses.

His army was now little more than a fleeing mob. Once more he was struck at the Muscle Fork of the Chariton. Many of his men were drowned trying to get across the stream.

With only four hundred followers out of the fifteen hundred he had at the beginning, Poindexter fled westward. Guitar could follow no farther. Men and horses were exhausted.

In this remarkable campaign Guitar states that he lost only five men wounded, while he estimates that at least one hundred and fifty of the enemy were killed and drowned, and he had captured one hundred men and a thousand horses and mules.

Poindexter's misfortunes were not ended. As he fled west and south the remnant of his force was struck by General Ben Loan and totally dispersed, every guerrilla seeking his own safety. Poindexter found himself a wanderer without a single follower.

Disguising himself he skulked in the woods and found shelter in the houses of friends, but tireless on his path were Harry and his scouts. From covert to covert and from house to house they trailed him and at last ran him down.

They entered a house where an apparently sick man sat cowering in a corner, wrapped in a blanket. With a snarl Bruno was about to spring upon him when Harry stopped him, and going up to the man said, "The jig is up, Poindexter. You're not half as sick as you pretend."

With a groan and a curse the guerrilla chieftain yielded himself a prisoner.

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## CHAPTER VIII

## LONE JACK

Although the dispersion of Porter's and Poindexter's forces had apparently put an end, at least for a time, to the guerrilla warfare in Northeast Missouri, the situation was still threatening in Southwest Missouri. It was for that reason General Schofield had ordered Lawrence to that field to inspect the posts, and to see that the officers in command were vigilant and doing their full duty.

Rumors were rife that a large party under Hughes, Quantrell and others was gathering to attack Independence, also that a force was moving up from Arkansas to join them. Independence captured, the combined forces were to move on Lexington.

Lawrence was to sift down these rumors, and find out how much truth there was in them, and above all to impress on the officers in charge of the different posts the necessity of eternal vigilance.

But the blow fell just before Lawrence reached Lexington. Lieutenant Colonel Buell, in command at Independence, although repeatedly warned, allowed himself to be surprised. His forces were divided and not well posted, and after a spirited fight Buell surrendered, and with him about three hundred men were taken prisoners. The Confederate commander, Colonel Hughes, was killed in the action.

The capture of Independence greatly elated the guerrillas, and recruits came pouring in by the hundreds. They now only awaited the arrival of Colonel Coffee from the south and they would move on to Lexington. When Lawrence arrived at Lexington he found the place in the wildest excitement. Rumors said that the enemy numbered thousands, and that they were already marching on the place.

Lawrence acted quickly. He applied to the commander of the post for a detail of ten men, dressed in citizen clothes.

"Tell them," he said, "it is for a scout, so they will not be deceived as to the danger of the undertaking."

The ten men were easily procured, and, headed by Lawrence and Dan, started. The object was to find out the strength of the enemy under Coffee, and whether he could not be prevented from forming a union with the forces which had captured Independence.

The scout was far more successful than Lawrence could have hoped. Representing themselves as coming from north of the river, they had no trouble in meeting on friendly terms several small parties of guerrillas with whom they fell in. They were all on their way to join Thompson, who was now in command of the forces which had captured Independence. Everyone expected Lexington would be the next to fall, and they were all anxious to have a hand in the affair. Lawrence represented they were to find Coffee and hurry him up.

At length they were fortunate enough to fall in with a single guerrilla who was sitting by the side of the road, making the air blue with his curses.

"What's the matter?" asked Lawrence.

"My hoss stepped into a hole and threw me, and I have broken my leg," he groaned.

"That's bad," said Lawrence. "I will see what I can do for you."

"Yes, it's bad, and I was on my way from Colonel Coffee to Colonel Thompson."

"Ah! were you? Perhaps I can help you. I can send one of my men with the message. What was it?"

"That he would camp near Lone Jack on the evening of the fifteenth, and wanted Thompson to join him thar."

"How many men has Coffee?" Lawrence asked.

"About a thousand, but more are coming in all the time."

The information was important. It was just what Lawrence wanted, but what to do with the man and still keep him deceived puzzled Lawrence. This problem was solved by a native coming along driving a raw-boned horse before a rickety wagon. Lawrence stopped him. The disabled guerrilla was lifted into the wagon and taken to the nearest farmhouse. Here Lawrence left instructions for them to send for a physician to set the broken leg.

"Now I've done all I can for you," he told him, "and I must leave you, for my business is very important. I shall see that your message to Colonel Thompson is safely delivered."

No sooner were they out of sight than Lawrence said, "Now, boys, for Lexington."

When Lawrence made his report, Colonel Huston, in command at Lexington, acted with promptness. It was decided to send a force to strike Coffee at Lone Jack before Thompson and Quantrell could join him.

The utmost that could be done was to gather a little force of about seven hundred and fifty. This

force was placed in command of Major Emery Foster.

There was another force of about the same number under the command of Colonel Fitz Henry Warren at Clinton. Clinton being about the same distance from Lone Jack as Lexington, Warren was ordered to march there and join Foster, and the two forces combined to attack Coffee without delay.

In the meantime General Blunt, in command at Fort Scott, Kansas, had learned that Coffee had slipped past Springfield and was making north, and he started in pursuit with a thousand men.

A third force under Colonel Burris of the Kansas Infantry was ordered to move from Kansas City and try to catch Thompson and Quantrell before they could join Coffee.

Thus it looked as if the Confederates were hemmed in, and if everything went right, could be captured.

Lawrence decided to join the expedition under Foster.

Foster's little army left Lexington on the morning of the fifteenth of August, and by a rapid march reached the vicinity of Lone Jack by evening. Here at nine o'clock at night he surprised Coffee in camp, routing him, his men fleeing in confusion.

Foster took possession of the abandoned camp and waited until morning. Warren had not been heard from.

Lawrence still was in command of his scouts, and he volunteered to see if he could find Warren.

The night was dark and they had to be careful.

"If we only had Harry and Bruno," sighed Lawrence to Dan, as they were groping their way along as best they could.

"If we had we wouldn't be going at this snail pace," answered Dan.

They could find nothing of Warren and started to return. On the way back they came to a cross road and halted in doubt as to which road to take. While debating, the sound of approaching horses was heard.

"Halt," commanded Lawrence as two guerrillas rode up.

"Who are yo' uns?" they asked, surprised.

"We 'uns are from Thompson. I was afraid yo' uns were Yanks. Whar is Coffee?"

"The Yanks struck his camp a few hours ago and made us git."

"Many hurt?"

"I reckon not. We 'uns run too fast."

"Glad to heah that. Thompson sent me to tell Coffee he would be with him by morning. Coffee hasn't run clear away, has he?"

"No, he's gittin' his men together and will be all right by morning. How many men has Thompson?"

"About twelve or fifteen hundred. You see, Quantrell and Hayes air with him. An Red Jerry has promised to come with his company."

"Together we 'uns ought to eat the Yanks up tomorrow."

"I don't see any use of your going farther, as Thompson is coming," said Lawrence. "So you might as well go with us into camp."

To this the guerrillas agreed, and their surprise can be imagined when they found themselves in Foster's camp instead of Coffee's.

The report of Lawrence that he could not find Warren, and that Thompson would join Coffee in the morning troubled Foster.

"The whole combined force will be down on us in the morning," he said. "Where can Warren be? Surely he cannot fail, for his orders were positive, and mine were positive to stay here and wait for him. And stay I will, if all the devils in Missouri are around me."

Lawrence looked at him with admiration. "Major, you are a man after my own heart," he said. "I will make one more attempt to find Warren. This time I will only take Sherman with me, as I do not wish to deplete your little force by a single man."

"It will be dangerous, only two of you," replied Foster.

"Not as much danger as you will be in if Warren does not come," answered Lawrence. "God grant I may find him."

"Amen!" said Foster, fervently.

The two men shook hands and Lawrence and Dan rode away. It lacked but an hour till day.



Morning came, but there was no Warren, and neither had Dan and Lawrence returned. The new day had hardly begun when the guerrilla hordes poured down on Foster's little army, confident of an easy victory.

Now began one of the bloodiest and most fiercely contested small battles of the war. The enemy had no artillery, but Foster had two pieces of the Third Indiana battery. The lieutenant in charge of the piece, J. F. Devlin, had been removed by Major Foster the night before for being intoxicated, and the guns placed in charge of Sergeant James M. Scott, and nobly did he uphold the confidence placed in him. Never was there a battery better or more bravely served. Time and time again did the enemy charge upon the guns, only to be flung back, bleeding and torn.

During a lull in the conflict, Lieutenant Devlin, somewhat recovered from his drunken debauch, staggered on the field and ordered his men to abandon the pieces. Accustomed to obey their superior officer, the men did so. The enemy saw and with fiendish yells of triumph swarmed upon and over the pieces.

It was a critical moment. Major Foster hastily collected sixty men and charged on the guns—so shamelessly abandoned by the order of a drunken commander. Of the sixty men who charged, but eleven reached the guns, the rest had fallen, and among them the gallant Major. Others now rushed to the rescue, the artillery men came back, and once more the guns were thundering their defiance. The enemy again rushed on them, only to be bloodily repulsed.

Disheartened, the Confederates now fell back, leaving the field to those who had so valiantly defended it. But the situation of the little band was perilous. Nothing had been heard from Warren, and nearly one-half of the force had fallen. Captain Brawner, on whom the command had fallen, resolved to retreat to Lexington. In doing this the two cannon had to be abandoned.

Every horse had been shot, even the harnesses were in tatters. Of the thirty-six artillery men manning the guns, twenty-four had been killed and wounded. The severely wounded had to be left, among them the gallant Foster.<sup>[5]</sup>

So severe had been the punishment administered to the enemy that the Federals were not molested in their retreat. It put an end to all the Confederates' hopes of capturing Lexington.<sup>[6]</sup>

But where were Lawrence and Dan all the time the battle was raging? Why had they not brought Colonel Warren to the rescue?

In the early morning they had run into a small party of guerrillas, had boldly charged them and put them to flight, but the sound of firing had brought a larger party, and they blocked the way Lawrence and Dan wished to go. It was now light, and they saw the band numbered at least fifty. There was no help for it, they had to turn and run, and that in a direction that for aught they knew would bring them in the midst of the enemy.

With fierce yells the guerrillas took up the pursuit and the chase was a hot one. Lawrence and Dan were well mounted, but a few of the guerrillas were just as well mounted, and pressed them closely.

Now as they fled, above the sound of their horses' hoofs rose the sound of battle. Just the faint cracking of musketry, and then the boom of the cannon.

"Great Heavens!" gasped Lawrence. "They are at it. Foster and his little band against thousands. Why did we leave them? We might have been of a little help."

"And we are going farther away from Warren every minute," groaned Dan.

Here the whistling of a bullet from the revolver of the nearest guerrilla brought their thoughts back to the seriousness of their own situation. They had now gone beyond the sound of the musketry, but the roar of the cannon grew more incessant, and they knew they were almost in the rear of the enemy.

Coming to where there were open fields, they glanced to the right and saw the stragglers and wounded drifting to the rear, as is always the case in time of battle. They must turn or they would soon be in the midst of the rabble.

Fortunately, they came to a cross road and turned into it. They were now followed by only five or six of their pursuers, the rest having turned back to take part in the battle. But these half dozen were mounted on the fleetest horses and were gaining on them rapidly. Already the bullets were singing around them freely.

"This cannot last," Lawrence exclaimed. "Our horses are becoming winded. We must find some way to stop those fellows."

"We've got to stop them," said Dan. "My horse is staggering and I look for him to drop any minute."

They rode over a little hill that for a moment put them out of sight. "Now," said Lawrence, halting and wheeling his horse. Dan did the same.

"When they come over the hill give it to them," exclaimed Lawrence. "It will be a question of who can shoot the straightest."

Dan smiled and he drew his revolver. He was known to be a dead shot, and nothing rattled him.

They had hardly two seconds to wait when four of the guerrillas dashed over the rise. Seeing Lawrence and Dan facing them and not thirty yards away, startled them and they instinctively tried to check their headlong pace. It was a fatal mistake, for it disconcerted their aim and their shots went wild.

To his astonishment, Lawrence recognized one of the guerrillas as Jerry Alcorn, his old time enemy. Lawrence fired, but just as he did so Jerry's horse threw up his head and the ball struck him squarely between the eyes. The horse dropped like a stone, pinning Jerry for a moment to the ground.

Dan had fired the same time Lawrence did and his guerrilla pitched headlong. The report of his shot had not died before he shot again and a second guerrilla fell.

The remaining guerrilla had no stomach to continue the fight, and wheeled his horse to flee. Once more Dan's revolver spoke, and the guerrilla fell forward, but he clung desperately to the neck of his horse and was soon carried from view.

It took Jerry Alcorn but a moment to extricate himself from his horse, and as he half rose he fired at Lawrence, but missed. Lawrence returned the fire, and the ball struck Jerry's revolver and sent it spinning. With a mocking laugh Jerry sprang into the bushes along the road. "Not this time, Lawrence Middleton," he shouted as he disappeared, "but we'll meet again."

"Let's get out of here," said Lawrence. "We can't follow Jerry in the brush and we are now safe from pursuit."

Even the short stop had allowed their horses a breathing spell and they could now ride more leisurely.

"Dan, I'm a poor stick. I should be reduced to the ranks and you given my commission," said Lawrence.

"How's that?" asked Dan.

"Didn't you get three of those fellows, and I only killed a horse and disabled a revolver. Missed three shots." Lawrence had fired again at Jerry as he disappeared in the brush. "Bah! I'm ashamed of myself."

"Look here!" said Dan. "It was that measly horse. He had no business to throw up his head at that moment. Served him right to get killed."

"But the second shot, Dan. It went wild and hit his revolver, and the third missed altogether. And of all men to let Jerry Alcorn escape. Kick me, Dan."

"Might have bored one of us if you hadn't knocked the revolver out of his hand," answered Dan, "so shut up."

They had ridden far out of their way and had to make a wide circuit to get back. A little before noon the distant booming of the cannon was heard no longer.

"It's all over," sighed Lawrence, "and I'm afraid."

Dan's jaws came together with a snap and a dark scowl came over his face. "Why in thunder didn't Warren come?" he wrathfully exclaimed. "Some of these officers make me tired."

It was the middle of the afternoon before Warren was found. He was fearful of an attack on himself, and was several miles from the battlefield.

To Lawrence's request to hurry the Colonel replied, "You say the battle is over and in all probability Foster's whole force captured. In that case I can do no good. My force is but little greater than that Foster had."

"But they may not all be captured. You may be able to cover the retreat," Lawrence urged.

"The best I can do is to stay and watch the enemy, and wait for reinforcements," replied Warren.

Lawrence and Dan were disgusted, but Warren was right in not seeking an engagement with his small force.

"What shall we do, Dan?" Lawrence asked with a heavy heart as they turned away.

"Try and see what has become of Foster," answered Dan.

"You're right, Dan."

They were about to ride away when news came that Foster's force was in full retreat for Lexington, and that those who survived the battle were safe.

Lawrence and Dan concluded to stay with Warren.

Knowing that a force from Kansas City, as well as General Blunt from the far south, was closing in on the Confederates, they had high hopes that they might be captured. But during the night Coffee's entire force slipped by Blunt and, before the movement was discovered, was well on its way to Arkansas. The guerrilla bands of Quantrell, Red Jerry and others took to the brush, there to remain hidden until the Federal troops had returned to their several posts.

Lawrence and Dan returned to Lexington disgusted. They believed that if the different forces had acted together, and the campaign been managed rightly, the entire force of the enemy could have been captured.

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## CHAPTER IX

### CAPTURED BY GUERRILLAS

There is little doubt that Major Foster's plucky fight at Lone Jack saved Lexington, for had he not gone out and attacked the Confederates, they would have marched straight on that place, as was their intention.

The fight halted them and gave the Federals time to concentrate.

All danger of the Federals being driven from the State by a partisan uprising now being over, and the deep laid plans of General Hindman and other Confederate leaders being brought to naught, General Schofield resolved to concentrate his army at Springfield.

The army that was known as "The Army of the Northwest" had now been designated "The Army of the Frontier," and General Schofield decided to leave the command of the Department of Missouri in other hands and assume the command of the Army of the Frontier in person, with headquarters at Springfield.

Before returning to St. Louis business took Lawrence to Fort Leavenworth. He had not been there since 1856, when a forlorn little boy of twelve, without money and without friends, he had taken passage for St. Louis. How the memory of those days came rushing over him. The mob, the tarring and feathering of his father, Judge Lindsly taking them in,—the gallant defence of his father by Judge Lindsly,—the raid by John Brown,—the flight to Kansas,—his father's death,—it all came back to him like a mighty rushing torrent.

He wondered how Judge Lindsly was now. How was he faring in these troublesome times? Was he being robbed by both guerrillas and Federals? He determined to visit him. Perhaps he might be of some protection to him as far as the Federal side was concerned.

He spoke of his determination to the commander at Fort Leavenworth and that officer replied, "You cannot go without an escort. The country is swarming with guerrillas who never lose a chance of shooting any Federals who are unwise enough to stray outside of the lines. There is a detachment of our troops at Platte City and I will give you an escort that far. How far is it from Platte City to where Judge Lindsly lives?"

"I should say nine or ten miles," replied Lawrence.

"Well, do not try to make the trip from there without a good escort. A Captain Leeper is in command at Platte and he will readily supply you with one."

Lawrence thanked him and was ready to start when the escort, which consisted of a sergeant and five men, made their appearance.

Dan had found some old friends at Leavenworth who had been with him in the troublesome times on the border before the war, and he concluded to stay with them while Lawrence made his visit. As it turned out, it was fortunate that he did so.

Crossing the river on a ferry, Lawrence and his escort mounted their horses and started for Platte City, but a few miles away. It was with a sad heart that Lawrence looked over the country. What had been one of the most beautiful portions of the State had become almost a desolate waste. Ruined houses and deserted farms met his gaze at every turn.

When Platte City was reached Lawrence received a cordial welcome from Captain Leeper, who, on hearing his request, readily consented to give him an escort of a corporal and four men.

"A few days ago," said the Captain, "I would not have dared to send so small an escort, for a gang of bushwhackers under the command of a notorious guerrilla named Lamar has been scourging the neighborhood, but Colonel Penick, last week, came over from Liberty and scattered them. He captured two, whom he shot, and burned two or three houses whose owners had been harboring the gang. It has been very quiet ever since. I think he has thoroughly dispersed the gang."

This news was not very cheering to Lawrence. Shooting guerrillas after they were caught and burning houses did not tend to make those left less cruel.

When Lawrence came in sight of the once fine plantation of Judge Lindsly his heart bled. The fields were neglected, not half of them under cultivation, and those that were, poorly tended, but to his relief the house had not been disturbed.

Although greatly surprised, the Judge received Lawrence with open arms. "I often see your name in the papers," he said, "and rejoice at your advancement, although it is at the cost of the cause I love."

"Tell me of yourself," said Lawrence, "and all that has happened to you during the last months of trial."

The Judge sighed deeply and replied, "Look and see for yourself what this unhappy war has not only brought upon me, but on the whole State. I have been preyed upon by both Federals and guerrillas. Most of my slaves have left me. To make my position more intolerable, I am *persona non grata* with both sides. The guerrillas do not like me because I denounce guerrilla warfare. I tell them if the independence of the South is ever achieved, it will be done by the great armies in the field, and that the place of every man who loves and would fight for the South should be in the army, not hiding in the brush. General Price should have had the fifty thousand men he called for. He would have had them if everyone who has played the part of guerrilla had responded. With such an army he would have swept the State clear of Federals.

"I told them the late uprising of the partisan bands would only bring more misery, bloodshed and murder on the State, and nothing would be accomplished, and so it has proven.

"I was denounced for these opinions and my life has been threatened by Quantrell, Lamar and others.

"On the other hand, I am continually being threatened with arrest by the Federals. I have absolutely refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Federal Government. Now that the worst has come, I am with the South heart and soul, and I will not perjure myself."

Lawrence was deeply moved. He could only press the hand of the old Judge in sympathy and say, "If I have any influence you will never be arrested. If you ever get in trouble let me know. What I can do I will."

This the Judge promised, and when it came time to part he held Lawrence's hand lingeringly and said with emotion, "Would to God, Lawrence, you were my own son and fighting for the right, but I love you as it is. May your life be spared."

Lawrence's eyes filled with tears. He tried to speak, but his voice failed. He could only press the hand of the Judge as they parted.

Riding a short distance he turned and looked back. Judge Lindsly was still standing on the porch looking after him and waved his hand. Lawrence choked back a sob as he waved his hand in return. The once erect form of the Judge was bowed and bent; his gray hair was perfectly white, and he leaned on his cane, weak and trembling.

It was months before Lawrence saw him again, and then it was in a prison pen at Kansas City.

All unconscious of danger, Lawrence started back to Platte City. His visit had left a heavy load on his heart. He thought of the time the Judge saved his father's life, risking his own to do so, and his image rose before him, as he stood, proud, erect, like a lion at bay, facing the mob.<sup>[7]</sup>

They had covered about half the distance to Platte City without incident, Lawrence and the corporal riding side by side, the four troopers a short distance in advance.

Suddenly from a thicket two rifles blazed. The corporal fell from his horse dead, the horse which Lawrence rode plunged forward on his head, throwing Lawrence heavily, and he lay unconscious in the road.

The four troopers, seeing both Lawrence and the corporal, as they supposed, lying dead, put spurs to their horses and rode for their lives to Platte City to give the alarm.

At the head of twenty men Captain Leeper started for the scene of action, but all he found was the dead body of the corporal, and that of Lawrence's horse. The horse had been shot through the head and both saddle and bridle were missing.

The guerrillas had hung the body of the corporal from a tree and there it dangled over the road, a gruesome object. To the lapel of his coat they had pinned a paper on which was written, "The fate that awaits all Kansas Jayhawkers."

Of Lawrence there were no signs, and as night was falling, Captain Leeper returned to Platte City full of wrath, but impotent to avenge.

When the guerrillas fired the corporal was slightly in advance of Lawrence and the bullet had gone clear through his body and struck Lawrence's horse. The horse falling had saved Lawrence's life, as he being thrown had caused the second guerrilla to miss him.

When Lawrence came to, there were two guerrillas standing gloating over him. "Say, Jim," said one. "This feller ain't dead. He's wiggling. Shall I finish him?"

"No, let's take him to the captain," replied the other. "He's a Yankee officer, and if we 'uns hang him all the boys will want to see the fun."

It was not long before Lawrence fully came to. To the jeers and taunts of his captors he made no reply. But when he saw there were but two of them he mentally cursed the four escorts who had so cowardly left him to his fate.

After he was securely bound he was forced to stand while the two, with foul epithets, hung the body of the corporal over the road.

"Thar yo' un can see what yo' un are coming to," one said, grinning at Lawrence. "How do yo' un like it?"

Lawrence made no answer, and with a curse and a growl the guerrillas turned away.

Lawrence was now placed on the horse that had been ridden by the corporal, his hands tied behind him and his feet securely bound beneath the horse on which he rode. One of the guerrillas tied the halter of the horse to the saddle of the one he rode, and they started for the secret rendezvous of the gang. It was long after nightfall before they reached it.

Captain Lamar and most of the gang were found to be away, so supperless and bound, Lawrence was placed under a tree to await the morning.

The cords with which he was bound cut into his flesh and he was parched with thirst. He asked for water, but a curse was the only answer.

There throughout the rest of the night Lawrence lay, the stars looking pityingly down upon him. He could not sleep, his sufferings were too great, and there was the uncertainty of the morrow. What would the end be?

All his life passed before his mental vision in a panoramic vision. He lived it all over again.

Morning came, but Captain Lamar and the rest of the gang had not yet returned. He was given some breakfast, but taunted with the fact that it would be his last meal on earth. Better than the food was the water which cooled his parched mouth and tongue. No nectar that ever flowed tasted half so sweet.

About nine o'clock Captain Lamar came. He was in a towering rage, for his expedition had failed and he had lost two men.

When told two of his men had killed a Yankee and captured a Yankee captain, he asked what had been done with the captain.

"He is heah," said one of the men. "We 'uns have been waitin' to see what yo' un wanted to do with him."

"Hang him or shoot him, I don't care which," he growled as he turned away. "I'm tired and hungry and want some breakfast."

The Captain's decision was told, but the gang decided to wait until the men who came in with the Captain had had breakfast, so all could enjoy the sport. To the savage men the hanging or shooting of a Yankee was an enjoyable event.

When breakfast was over there was quite a discussion as to whether Lawrence should be hung or shot. Those in favor of hanging carried the day, so he was led under the projecting limb of a tree and a rope placed around his neck.

Lawrence felt all hope was gone. He was standing face to face with death. For a moment he felt faint and a deadly fear seized him. Few there be who in health and strength can face Death without a fear. As they look him in his face and his shadowy wings cover them, nature recoils and would flee from him.

But it was only a moment that Lawrence feared. He gulped back the lump in his throat; his trembling nerves became as steel. He was a man—a soldier again. He had faced death on the battlefield without a quiver and he would do so now, though this was different, it was coming in such a horrible form; but he would face it. He looked into the scowling faces around him without a sign of fear.

"What do yo' un have to say before we 'uns string you up?" demanded one of the men.

"Nothing," answered Lawrence, "but I would be thankful if you would inform Judge Lindsly of my fate. He at least will give my body a decent burial."

At this the guerrillas burst into a boisterous laugh. "That's a good one," they cried. "He reckons we 'uns bury the Yanks we 'uns hang. Young feller, we 'uns will pitch your carcass in the brush and leave it for the buzzards to pick—that is, if a Missouri buzzard will pick a dead Yank."

At this sally there was another burst of laughter.

Just then there came a diversion. One of the men, Cal Jones, who had been one of the party with Lamar, had missed a Federal soldier at short range, and his companions were guying him unmercifully.

"Why," drawled one called Hooper, "Cal couldn't hit a barn door at fifty paces."

Cal was hopping mad. "I'll bet yo' un a hoss I ken put a ball through that Yank's heart at fifty paces," he roared.

"Done," exclaimed Hooper. "Heah, boys, stop that picnic for a few moments. Cal has bet me a hoss he can plug that Yank through the heart at fifty paces the first shot."

Some of the men began to demur, but Hooper, in a tantalizing tone, drawled, "Don't be skeered, boys. Cal will sure miss him, and we 'uns can have our fun afterwards."

"I'll show yo' un. I'll show yo' un," yelled Cal, hopping around like a mad turkey.

They now all fell in with the idea, and Lawrence was placed with his back against a tree. To him the diversion came as a welcome relief. He would now die like a soldier and not like a felon.

"Hold on thar!" cried Hooper, as Jones began to pace the distance. "I said fifty paces, not fifty steps. Yo' un don't come that on me."

"I am pacin'." snarled Cal. "Want to back out, do yer?"

"Not much, but I'll do that pacin' myself." And he began.

"No, yer don't," yelled Cal. The men were about to fight when the others interfered, saying it was only fair a third party should do the pacing. This was agreed to and the pacing duly done. Jones took his position, a huge navy revolver in his hand.

Lawrence stood facing him. Not a muscle quivered as he looked his would-be executioner in the eye.

Jones raised his weapon. "Stand back," yelled Hooper. "Don't get too close, some of yo' uns will get hurt. The Yank is in no danger."

Jones fired, but he was too angry to shoot straight, and his shot went wild.

"What did I tell yo' un? What did I tell yo' un?" cried Hooper. "Never teched the Yank or tree, either," and he kicked up his heels like a young colt. "That hoss is mine."

The whole crowd shouted in derision, and Jones, in anger, fired every shot in his revolver before they could stop him. Lawrence stood unmoved and smiling. One shot had struck the tree an inch above his head, another had passed between his arm and body, and a third had cut a little piece out of his coat on the shoulder. The humorous aspect of the affair struck him, and he laughed outright.

The guerrillas simply went crazy with delight. Many of them threw themselves on the ground rolling and kicking with laughter.

Captain Lamar heard the shots and the uproar and came to see what it meant. He had just finished his breakfast and was in a little better humor. When he heard what had happened he remarked with a cruel smile, "Turn about is fair play. Better put Cal up, and see what the Yank can do."

This suggestion took like wildfire. Cal was seized by his comrades and, frightened and begging for his life, was being hustled to the tree to take Lawrence's place when the Captain interfered. "Hold on, boys," he said. "I only wanted to frighten Cal. But if he don't learn to be a better shot I'll hang him sure. But that Yank must be a gritty fellow. I'll have a look at him."

"Gritty," said one of the men. "Well, I should say so. He turned kind of white around the gills when he first felt the halter around his neck, and then braced up and not a whimper. Why, he actually laughed when Cal was shooting at him."

"That was because Cal was shooting so wild," remarked the Captain.

"Three of the shots came mighty close to him. Only missed him by a hair's breadth."

"Glad to hear Cal is improving," said Lamar dryly, as he walked towards Lawrence.

He had no sooner looked him in the face than an expression of surprise came over his countenance. He stepped back, swept his hand across his eyes, as if he was brushing away something, looked again and then turned away, saying, "There'll be no hanging. Untie the prisoner and bring him to my tent."

The men gazed at each other in astonishment. But great as was their surprise, greater was Lawrence's. The shock was almost as great as when he thought he had to die. Then he began to realize he had stepped from the shadow of death, and there was hope of living, and he breathed a prayer of thankfulness.

His surprise grew when Lamar called the two men who had captured him and asked what they had of his.

"Everything, Captain, but his hoss. That was killed. But we 'uns have got the hoss of the Yank that was killed," they answered.

"Well, bring everything you have of his, and the horse you captured—saddled and bridled," he ordered, and the men departed wondering.

When Lawrence was brought before Lamar he asked him what he was doing in this part of the country. Lawrence told him he had been to visit Judge Lindsly, who had greatly befriended him when he was small.

"Are you the boy whose father was tarred and feathered, and the Judge took you both in?"

"I am."

Lamar chuckled. "Say, boy, do you know I was in that crowd?"

"No," answered Lawrence, more astonished than ever.

"Well, I was. But here is your horse and everything taken from you. You are at liberty to take them and ride away. Nay, more, I will send an escort with you to protect you until you are near the lines of your friends."

Lawrence's lips trembled and his voice was husky as he answered, "Captain, I don't know why you have granted me such clemency, but I am thankful from the bottom of my heart. Be assured if the time ever comes when I can return you the same mercy you have shown me it will be done."

"We are at quits now," said Lamar. "You saved my life once."

"I?" cried Lawrence. "I never remember having seen you before."

"You have. About a year ago I belonged to a body of partisans commanded by Captain Proctor. A fellow by name of Semans peached on us. We paid him off by burning his buildings and shooting him. Just as we finished the job a body of cavalry charged down and drove us off. I was left on the field desperately wounded. Some of the men were about to shoot me as I lay there helpless, but the captain of the cavalry, a mere boy, sprang in, with his sword, beat down the guns, and swore that no wounded man, no matter what he had done, should be ruthlessly murdered while he was commanding that company. Captain, you are that boy; I am that wounded man."

"Ah, I remember," murmured Lawrence.

"That is not all," continued Lamar. "You tenderly cared for me, had me taken to a near-by house, where I stayed until I recovered. Captain, no thanks. As I have said, we are quits now. If we meet again it will be on even terms. One promise you must make me. You must not lead the Federals to this place for the next twenty-four hours. After that I do not care."

"The promise is freely given," answered Lawrence.

The two men, so strangely met, shook hands, and Lawrence mounted his horse and, accompanied by two of the guerrillas, rode away.

On the way they met several rough-looking men who looked at Lawrence with malevolent eyes, but a few whispered words from his guards and they were allowed to pass on. Lawrence now saw why Captain Lamar had sent a guard with him.

After they had traveled several miles Lawrence saw a line of blue galloping towards him.

"Go, I will see you are not followed," he said to his guards. They raised their hands in salute, turned, and putting spurs to their horses, were soon out of sight.

In a moment more Lawrence was in the arms of Dan Sherman, who was hugging him, laughing and crying at the same time.

"I'll never leave you again," he cried.

"It is fortunate that you did," replied Lawrence, "for if you had been with me there would be no Dan Sherman now."

The officer in command of the company now bustled up. "Did I not see two men with you, Captain?" he asked. "They looked to me very much like guerrillas."

"They were friends," answered Lawrence. "Neither can I guide you to the haunts of those who held me prisoner. Tomorrow you are at liberty to find them if you can. Turn back with me to Platte City and I will tell you my story."

When they heard the story they marvelled and swore they had never heard of any gratitude in a guerrilla's heart before.<sup>[8]</sup>

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## CHAPTER X

### THE GUERRILLA'S BRIDE

"How did you come to be with the soldiers I met?" asked Lawrence of Dan. The two were now in Leavenworth, waiting for a boat to take them down the river.

"It was this way," answered Dan. "When those rascally cavalymen deserted you and rode back to Platte City, word was sent post-haste here, asking for a company to go to the aid of Captain Leeper, and help chastise the band which had murdered you, and, if possible, to procure your body. I was nearly wild when I heard you had been killed, and nothing could have prevented me from accompanying the company sent to Captain Leeper. I tell you, charges ought to be preferred against those four men who so basely deserted you. They should be court-martialed for cowardice and shot."

"Not so fast, Dan," replied Lawrence. "Those men heard the shots, looked back and saw, as they supposed, the Corporal and myself both killed. They did not know how many guerrillas were in

the brush, and they did the best and about the only thing they could do—get to Platte City as soon as possible, and give the alarm."

"They should have known there were but two from the report of the guns," grumbled Dan. "I tell you it was a cowardly trick. Do you think I would have left you, if I had been one of the four?"

"No, Dan," said Lawrence, laying his hand on his shoulder, affectionately. "You would have charged back there if there had been fifty guerrillas, instead of two; but all men are not dear old Dan."

There was a suspicious moisture in Dan's eyes, but he only said: "Pshaw! Any fellow with any grit would have done it."

A boat coming along, they took passage for Lexington, the boat making quite a long stop at Kansas City. They found that all fear that the enemy might be able to capture the towns along the Missouri had subsided. Everywhere the guerrillas had been beaten, and they were fleeing south by the hundreds to hide in the Ozarks or among the mountains of northern Arkansas. Still, numerous small bands remained in hiding. Within a radius of a hundred miles, taking Lexington as a center, then were a score of these bands operating, but there were two of them which were especially daring and troublesome.

One of these bands was led by the notorious Quantrell, and the other by Jerry Alcorn, known as Red Jerry.

Jerry, the year before, had fled from St. Louis, being detected in a plot to assassinate Lawrence Middleton and Guilford Craig. He had joined Price's army, but soon deserted to become leader of a band of guerrillas. Lawrence, with his scouts, had met this band the year before, and given it a crushing defeat. As has also been seen, it was Jerry and his men that chased Lawrence and Dan as they were going in search of Colonel Warner at Lone Jack.

When Lawrence reached Lexington, he received dispatches from General Schofield, saying he would not be able to go to Springfield to take command of the army quite as soon as he had expected, and that Lawrence should report to him at St. Louis; but before he reported he was to see that all the guerrilla bands around Lexington were dispersed.

Lawrence found that a force was being organized in Lexington to try to surprise and capture Red Jerry and his entire band. He determined to accompany it. But when he found the officer who was to command the expedition was a Colonel Jennison, he hesitated. He had but little use for that officer. He commanded one of those regiments known as jay-hawkers. The men composing the regiment were fighters, but in their tactics differed little from the guerrillas. With them it was "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

Lawrence talked it over with Dan, and they were so anxious that Red Jerry be brought to justice for his many crimes that he decided to overcome his repugnance to the Colonel, and go, taking the place of the Major of the regiment, who was sick.

Jerry was reported as hanging around the plantation of a Mr. Floyd Templeton, a very respected old gentleman, but a bitter Southern partisan. Mr. Templeton had two children—a son who was with Price, and a daughter who oversaw the household, the mother being dead.

This daughter, Agnes by name, was at this time about twenty, and was a strikingly beautiful girl. Her lustrous hair, dark as midnight, crowned a well-shaped head, which she carried as proudly as a queen. Her dark eyes, lovely in repose, could with a languishing glance cause the heart of the most prosaic of men to beat more rapidly; but in their depth was a hidden fire which would blaze forth when aroused, and show the tempestuous soul which dwelt within. She was above medium height, and her body was as lithe and supple as a panther's.

In vain had her hand been sought by the beaux for twenty miles around. When the war came, she told them no one need woo her until her beloved Missouri was free of the Yankee foe, and he who did win her must be a soldier, brave and true.

Some months before, Jerry's gang had been attacked and scattered, and Jerry, his horse being killed, fled on foot. In his flight he came to the Templeton house, his pursuers close behind.

He implored Agnes to save him, and this she did by secreting him in a hidden closet behind the huge chimney. To the Federal soldiers in pursuit she swore the guerrilla chieftain had passed by without stopping. A careful search of the house revealing nothing, the soldiers were forced to believe she told the truth.

Jerry was not only grateful to his fair preserver, but fell violently in love with her. The rough guerrilla soldier was not the soldier of the dreams of the proud, aristocratic girl. Concealing her repugnance to his advances, she gently but firmly refused him, telling him her duty was to her aged father. Jerry was so persistent in his advances that she finally told him he must never speak of the subject again, or he would be refused the house.

More than once did Jerry conceive the scheme of carrying her off by force and marrying her against her will; but he became aware that the girl possessed as fierce a spirit as his own, and if need were she would not hesitate to plunge a dagger in his heart.

With the fires of unrequited love burning in his heart, he had to cease his advances; but, like the silly moths that flutter around a candle, he made every excuse to call at the Templeton residence.



The girl warned him by saying that by his course he was bringing not only danger on himself, but on her father as well.

Jerry knew this, and the dastardly thought came to him that if the Federals did make way with her father, Agnes, in her loneliness, might come to him. It was a thought worthy of his black nature, but that he madly loved the girl, there was no doubt.

The expedition against Jerry was well planned, but he got wind of it, and scattered his force.

In a running fight that took place, Jerry captured two of Jennison's men. These he calmly proceeded to hang, almost in sight of Templeton's door, for the purpose of bringing down the wrath of Jennison on Templeton's head. Only too well did the damnable plot succeed.

Jennison was beside himself with rage, and after pursuing Jerry until all hopes of catching him had ended, he returned to the Templeton place, and, calling the old man to the door, he denounced him in the most violent terms, calling him a sneaking rebel, who made his house a rendezvous for murderers.

Mr. Templeton drew himself up proudly. "I may be what you call a rebel," he exclaimed, "but I am not a sneaking one. My heart and soul are with the South in her struggle for liberty, and every one knows it. As for the men you call guerrillas, I can no more help their coming here than I can help your coming."

"You lie, you old scoundrel!" shouted Jennison. "You invite them to come, and aid them in their nefarious work. The murderers you have been harboring hanged two of my men yesterday, almost at your very door, and no doubt you looked on and approved."

"I did no such thing," answered Mr. Templeton. "I did not know of the deed until it was done; then I told Alcorn never again to set foot on my premises."

"More lies, you canting old hypocrite. Do you know what I am going to do with you?" shouted Jennison.

"I am in your power; you can do anything you wish," answered Mr. Templeton, with dignity.

"I am going to shoot you, and burn your house," yelled Jennison.

"You will never harbor any more guerrillas."

At these words, Agnes sprang before her father, with a scream. "If you shoot any one, shoot me—not him," she said. "If there has been any harboring, it is I who am to blame. I have harbored those fighting to rid our State of such as you, and I glory in it. Shoot me—not him."

Lawrence and Dan just now rode up and gazed in astonishment at the scene. The girl stood in front of her father, her arms outspread, her bosom heaving with excitement, her eyes blazing, inviting the deadly volley.

Her tragic attitude, her wondrous beauty, awed the men, and they lowered the guns that had been raised to slay the father.

"Drag her away, and shoot!" commanded Jennison, with an oath.

"Hold!" cried Lawrence. "Colonel Jennison, do you realize what you are doing? What does this mean?"

"It means I'm going to shoot this old villain and burn the house. It means I am going to put an end to this harboring of guerrillas, if I have to burn every house in this accursed State," thundered Jennison. "Now drag the girl away."

"The first man that touches that girl dies!" cried Lawrence, drawing his revolver.

"I'm with you," said Dan, drawing his revolver, and taking his place by Lawrence's side.

For a moment Colonel Jennison was too astonished to speak; then his face turned livid with passion. "Young man," he hissed, "do you know what you are doing? By a word I can have you both shot—shot for mutiny—and, by God! I ought to say the word."

"But, Colonel, what you are going to do is an outrage," cried Lawrence, "a damnable outrage—one that will bring black disgrace on our arms. It is an act that General Schofield will never countenance, and in his name I ask you to countermand the order."

"Which I will not do!" exclaimed Jennison, white with rage. "I have been trammelled enough with orders from headquarters. I propose to deal with these red-handed assassins as I please. We, along the border, propose to protect ourselves. Captain Middleton, you and your companion are under arrest for insubordination. Lieutenant Cleveland, take their swords, and with a detail of six men escort them back to Lexington. When I return I will make a formal charge against them."

There was no use in resisting. The majority of Jennison's regiment was composed of men from Kansas who had suffered from the raids of the Border Ruffians before the war, or had been driven from their homes in Missouri, and heartily sympathized with the Colonel in his warfare of retaliation.

Lawrence also knew he had committed a grave offence when, in his indignation, he tried to

prevent the execution of Templeton by force. So he quietly submitted to arrest; but as he rode away there came to his ears the shrieks of the girl, then the sharp crack of three or four carbines. Lawrence shuddered and, looking back, he saw great columns of smoke rolling up, and through the blackness red tongues of leaping flame.

After the volley killing her father had been fired, the girl uttered one more shriek, and then stood with dry eyes, gazing as if in a trance; then with a low moan she threw herself on the still body, enfolding it with her arms as if she would shield it from the profane gaze of those around it. She lay as if dead; and so they left her.

Hours afterward, Red Jerry came creeping up from his hiding place, and found her. At first he thought her dead, but at his touch and the sound of his voice she aroused and stood up—but a changed being—changed from a woman into a demon.

She spoke a few words to Jerry, but in so low a tone his few followers who had gathered round could not hear. Jerry gently led her away from the rest; but the men noticed she walked as one seeing not.

They stopped under a tree not far away.

"Jerry," she said, in a tone devoid of the least sign of feeling, "you have often told me you loved me, and wanted me to become your wife. I have as often refused. I am now ready to marry you, if you make me one promise."

Red Jerry's heart gave a great bound. He had won. The peerless Agnes Templeton was to become his wife—he, a guerrilla chieftain.

"Anything you ask," he cried, rapturously, and attempted to take her in his arms.

"Do not touch me," she said, in the same passionless tones. "You must not touch me until you have promised, and not then until the words are spoken which give you a right."

"What is it you want me to promise, Agnes? You know anything in my power will be granted," Jerry replied, his voice showing the depth of his passion.

"That you will let me dress as a man and ride by your side; that you will never order me away, however great the danger; that where you are, I may always be."

"For you to ride at my side would be bliss," said Jerry; "but, oh! Agnes, to lead you into danger—how can I do it?"

"It must be as I say, or I can never be your wife," was her answer.

Jerry promised, and side by side they rode away to the home of a minister. It was near midnight when they reached it, and there, amid the clashing of the elements—for a fearful storm had arisen—the words were spoken that made Agnes Templeton the bride of Jerry Alcorn, the guerrilla.

Sacrificing everything feminine, except her luxuriant hair, which she coiled tightly on top of her head and concealed under a wide sombrero, she rode by the side of her husband throughout his career. No Federal thought the smooth-faced, handsome young man who was always with Jerry was a woman.

The band became known as one of the most cruel and merciless in the State. It revelled in deeds of bloodshed, and of all the band, the young man with the angel face and the heart of a demon, who rode by Red Jerry, was known as the most merciless.

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE STORY OF CARL MEYER

"Of all outrages!" exclaimed Dan.

"That girl! Wasn't she splendid?" answered Lawrence. "She made me think of some great tragic queen. What a scene for the stage!—and we saw it in reality."

"Wasn't thinking of the girl," sputtered Dan. "I was thinking of the outrage of sending us back under arrest."

"He had a right to, Dan. We could be court-martialed and shot."

"What! For interfering with the hellish work of that murderer? He is as bad as a guerrilla," angrily responded Dan.

"For drawing a weapon and interfering with his orders," replied Lawrence. "Good God! I could almost afford to be shot for the pleasure of putting a bullet through the black heart of Jennison. That girl—I wonder what will become of her!"

"Girl again!" growled Dan. "And don't blame Jennison too much. He had great provocation. No

doubt that old scoundrel had been shielding Jerry."

But Lawrence did not answer. He knew Dan's aversion to girls, and little was said as they rode on, mile after mile. Both Lawrence and Dan bitterly felt the disgrace of reporting back to Lexington under arrest.

Lawrence knew that the case would have to go to Schofield. If there was any court-martial, Schofield would have to order it, and Lawrence felt that the General would deal leniently with him.

But the case never went to Schofield. On his return from his raid, Colonel Jennison released Lawrence from arrest, saying he did so on account of his youth, and that no doubt he acted as he did from sudden impulse, owing to the distress and beauty of the girl. Neither did he think Lawrence understood the situation. Harsh means had to be used to prevent the guerrillas from murdering Union men.

The fact was, Colonel Jennison did not wish the case to be investigated. He, Lane, and others had been reprimanded so often by the Federal authorities that more than once they had threatened to turn guerrillas and wage warfare on their own account.

Soon after this affair, Lawrence was ordered to report at St. Louis.

"Now I suppose I can leave and join General Blair," said Lawrence, after he had given General Schofield a full report of what had happened.

"I trust you will stay with me a while yet," answered the General. "As I wrote you, I am about to take the field in person. We will have but little rest until Hindman, who is gathering a large force in northern Arkansas, is thoroughly whipped. There will be stirring times for the next two months. Blair is not needing you yet. Grant's army is very quiet—hasn't done much since Corinth fell and Memphis was taken. They are making slow progress along the Mississippi now."

Lawrence agreed to stay in Missouri a while longer. He was granted a two weeks' furlough, and then he was to report at Springfield.

The first use Lawrence made of his furlough was to visit his uncle, and he found that personage greatly elated over the prospects of the South. "I tell you, Lawrence," he exclaimed, "the independence of the South is already as good as secured. Why, just consider: McClellan whipped on the Peninsula, his army barely escaping; Pope completely crushed, his army almost annihilated, the remnant seeking refuge in the fortifications around Washington. Lee's army is sweeping victoriously through Maryland; Harper's Ferry taken with ten thousand prisoners. It will only be a matter of a few days until Washington is taken.

"Bragg is thundering at the very gates of Louisville. The whole of Tennessee and Kentucky will soon be redeemed. Buell's army will be driven across the Ohio. Grant has not gained a foot since the capture of Corinth. He has not, and never will, get past Vicksburg, I tell you, Lawrence, it's all over. The South has won."

"I admit, uncle," replied Lawrence, "that this has been a bad year for us. But the war isn't over. The worst is yet to come. In the end the South will be crushed."

"It cannot be! It cannot be!" cried his uncle, excitedly.

"Uncle, don't let us discuss the war," said Lawrence. "How long since you heard from Edward? I am anxious to hear all the news."

"He was well the last time I heard from him," said Mr. Middleton, "but I do not hear very often. It is harder to get letters through than it was; but, thank God! those we do get don't come through the hands of that traitor, Guilford Craig. You have heard no news of him, have you?"

"No; but it is curious his body was never found. There is little doubt but that he fell at Pea Ridge, and that at the hands of his step-brother."

"Served him right," growled Mr. Middleton.

"And Randolph Hamilton—what of him?" asked Lawrence.

"Randolph is also well, Edward writes."

"I am glad to hear that," answered Lawrence. "Randolph is a noble fellow. Lola Laselle did a fine thing when she saved him. How is Mrs. Hamilton now?"

"Mrs. Hamilton and Dorothy have gone to Europe," answered Mr. Middleton. "Mr. Hamilton thought it best to take her away from the excitement of the war."

"So Dorothy is gone," said Lawrence, "Well, she won't have to hold aside her skirts for fear of contamination, if I happen to pass her on the sidewalk."

"I thought you and Dorothy were great friends—kind of childish sweethearts," replied his uncle.

"That was before I turned Yankee," laughed Lawrence.

"Ah, my boy, Dorothy is not the only one who has been disappointed in you," sighed his uncle.

While Lawrence and Mr. Middleton were talking, a newsboy came running down the street,

yelling: "Extra! Extra! Terrible battle in Maryland. McClellan whips Lee. Fifty thousand men killed."

Mr. Middleton rushed out and purchased a paper. It told of the great battle at Antietam. He turned pale as he read, and his hands trembled so he could scarcely hold the paper. Lawrence heard him murmur, "Thank God! Edward was not in it."

Lawrence had no thought of exulting over the news in his uncle's presence; instead, he told him that the first reports of a battle were always exaggerated; but at the same time his heart was singing for joy. Afterward, when the news came that Lee had succeeded in getting his army safely across the Potomac, Mr. Middleton's hopes revived. It was a drawn battle, after all.

There was one in St. Louis that Lawrence could not fail to visit, and that was Lola Laselle, the girl who had taken his part on the steamboat, when a forlorn, dirty, homeless boy, and who had chosen him for her knight-errant when he went into the army.

Of all the young people Lawrence had associated with before the war, Lola was one of the few who had remained faithful to the old flag, and by so doing had been mercilessly cut by her young companions. But one day Lola hid Randolph Hamilton to keep him from being arrested as a spy, and this somewhat restored her to favor, especially with the Randolph family.

No sooner did Lola see Lawrence than she ran toward him with outstretched hands, crying, "Lawrence, Lawrence, is this indeed you? How glad I am to see you! And how you have grown! Why, you are a man!"

"And I am afraid I have lost my little girl," said Lawrence, as he took her hand, and gallantly raised it to his lips. "You have grown to almost a young lady."

"I don't know whether I like it or not," said Lola. "I sometimes think I had rather remain a little girl."

"I believe I am of your opinion," replied Lawrence, looking at her admiringly.

"Why, am I growing homely?" pouted Lola.

"That's not it. If you were still a little girl, I—I might have been permitted to kiss your cheek, instead of just your hand. Remember—"

"Stop! You mean thing!" commanded Lola, blushing furiously.

Lawrence gazed on her with admiration. She was certainly budding into a most beautiful girl.

"Lola, you are splendid!" he cried, "I wouldn't have you a little girl again. You are far ahead of any girl I know."

"How about Dorothy Hamilton?" she asked, mockingly.

"Dorothy Hamilton be hanged! How did you and she part?"

"Good friends. She and I correspond. After I saved Randolph, she could not do enough for me."

"Then she has some heart. I am glad to hear it," answered Lawrence, bitterly. "When I saved her from being crushed beneath the horse's feet, she rewarded me by calling me a miserable Yankee."

"Maybe she will be good to you some time," said Lola. "Remember how she used to cut me."

"I reckon I do," said Lawrence, "and it used to make me tearing mad. Lola, of all the girls I used to associate with, you are the only one who does not pass me with looks of contempt; but your friendship and sympathy are worth all I have lost—yes, a thousand times more."

"Don't magnify my importance; but I shall always be your friend, Lawrence," she said, simply.

They then fell to talking of other things, and Lawrence had to tell her of all his experiences. When he told her of his capture by the guerrillas, and how he had been ordered to be put to death, she shuddered and turned so pale he thought she was going to faint.

"Stop! Stop!" she gasped. "It was awful—awful! I cannot bear it."

"Wait and let me tell you how I escaped death," said Lawrence.

When he had finished, her eyes, though bedewed with tears, were shining with joy and pride.

"Lawrence," she cried, "I am prouder of you than ever. You were shown mercy, because you were merciful; and I would have my knight-errant as merciful as he is brave."

"How can he be otherwise, when she whose colors he wears is so kind and merciful?" gallantly replied Lawrence, and, taking her little hand in his, he raised it and pressed his lips against her trembling fingers.

"A true knight can always kiss the hand of the lady he serves," said Lawrence. He then bade her good-bye, with the promise of coming again before he went to the front.

Is it strange that, as he went on his way, his thoughts were all of the beautiful girl he had just left? But, all unbidden, there arose before him a mental vision of the face of another girl—a girl

whose queenly head was crowned with a wealth of golden hair, but whose eyes flashed with scorn at the sight of him—whose very soul loathed the uniform he wore; and he sighed, he hardly knew why.

Suddenly the thoughts of all girls were driven from his mind, for in the crowd before him he saw a well-known face—the face of Carl Meyer. Carl was a German boy, about a year older than Lawrence. It was he who had induced Lawrence to join the Home Guards, and thus paved the way to his acquaintance with Frank Blair. They had not met since the battle of Wilson Creek, when Carl went back with a broken arm.

In a moment the two clasped hands, their eyes telling what their lips refused to utter. At length Lawrence found voice. "My! how you have grown!" he exclaimed; "and this,"—he touched the strap of a second lieutenant on his shoulder—"Oh, Carl, I am so glad."

"And you," replied Carl, the joy gleaming in his honest eyes; "I see it's Captain now."

"Come with me, Carl. I must hear all that has happened to you since the last time we met."

In the privacy of Lawrence's room, Carl told his story—a story that Lawrence listened to breathless attention.

"The wound which I received at Wilson Creek was a bad one," said Carl, "and at first it was thought I would have to lose my arm; but I have it yet, and a pretty good arm it is. After I had recovered, which was early in January of this year, I was with the army which operated against New Madrid and Island Number 10. Lawrence, you should have been with me. It was glorious. The river fight—the mighty siege-guns—the great mortars which hurled shells weighing hundreds of pounds. It was as if all the thunders of heaven had gathered in one place to smite the earth.

"Then think of digging a canal twelve miles long, six miles of it through heavy timber. Great trees were sawed off beneath the water, to make a road for the transports."

"How could you do it? How could you do it?" broke in Lawrence.

"By standing on rafts or in boats and using saws with very long handles. It was a giant's task, but at last it was completed. Not only this, but, amid snow and chilling rains, bayous were waded, swamps considered impassable struggled through; and at last New Madrid and Island Number 10 fell.

"The fruits of these victories were glorious: nearly two hundred cannon, great and small; seven thousand prisoners, as many small arms, great stores of the munitions of war, and several transports sunk. All of this with a loss of only fifty."

"It was glorious, Carl," cried Lawrence. "No wonder you feel proud of being one of an army that dared so much, and accomplished so much."

"Wait until you hear the rest," replied Carl. "After Island Number 10 fell, most of the army was sent to reinforce Halleck before Corinth; but my command was left. We soon had possession of the Mississippi nearly to Memphis; but rumors came of the Confederates building an immense fleet of gunboats and ironclad rams.

"Our gunboats moved down and attacked, but were repulsed and driven back. Colonel Charles Ellet had been given authority to build some rams. He hastily constructed some out of old river steamboats, converting them into engines of destruction. With these wooden rams, without cannon, and without an armed crew, Colonel Ellet proposed to attack and destroy the whole fleet.

"Eleven sharpshooters had been chosen and placed on the *Monarch*. I was fortunate enough to be one of the eleven. We were the only armed men aboard the ram. The *Monarch* was commanded by Colonel Alfred Ellet, a brother of Charles. Charles was aboard the ram, *Queen of the West*.

"It was dusk when we came to our fleet of gunboats anchored across the Mississippi. Below them, a little above Memphis, lay the Rebel fleet, anchored in a line across the river. There the two fleets lay like two great beasts ready to spring on each other.

"Colonel Ellet anchored and waited for the morning. Hardly was it light when there came the boom of a great gun. It was a beautiful morning, and as the thunder of the gun reverberated over the water, thousands of the people of Memphis rushed to the bluffs to witness the battle and, with waving flags and shouts of encouragement, cheer their men on to victory.

"On, in imposing line, comes the Rebel fleet, the smokestacks of their vessels belching forth great clouds of smoke, and their guns thundering as they come. Now the guns of our fleet answer their thunder, and the bluffs on which the people are gathered shake and tremble with the concussion. A black wall of smoke settles down and hides our fleet from view; only through the blackness can be seen the flashes of the great guns.

"Hardly had the battle opened when Colonel Ellet signalled for his fleet of rams to get under way. The *Queen of the West* and the *Monarch* got off first, and straight for the wall of blackness, lit by the fitful flashes, we steered. We entered that wall, and everything was blotted from view—only around and about us was the roar of the great guns, the bursting of shells.

"Suddenly, as if emerging from the mouth of a tunnel, we burst from the cloud of smoke, and before us at full speed was coming the Rebel fleet, nearly a dozen gunboats and ironclads, against two wooden, unarmed rams.

"Colonel Ellet never swerved; ahead at full speed he drove the *Queen of the West* for the *General Lovell*. We could see the tall figure of Colonel Ellet standing on the hurricane-deck of the *Queen*. With his hat he signalled his brother to steer for the *General Price*, and on the two rams rushed, the *Queen* slightly ahead.

"The *General Lovell* drew out from their line and steered straight for the *Queen*. Like two great monsters, the boats rushed at each other. We forgot to cheer; we heeded not the thunder of battle; we could only look at these two vessels rushing to what seemed certain destruction.

"Even the excited cheering of the crowd on the bluffs grew silent. With tense nerves and white faces, they watched the two vessels. Coming as they were, it meant the destruction of both. Would not one swerve to avoid the coming blow? Still standing on the deck of his vessel, his eye fixed on his prey, Ellet drove the *Queen* forward—not a hair's breadth would he swerve.

"Just before the shock came, the *General Lovell* swerved to try to avoid the coming blow—but too late. Full amidships the *Queen* struck her, cutting her through like a great knife, and the vessel sank beneath the turbid waters of the river, all the crew not killed struggling in the water.

"From the thousands on shore there came a mighty groan—a wail of agony which seemed to throb and quiver through the air, making itself felt even above the roar of the battle.

"Now was our turn. The *Monarch* struck the *General Price* a glancing blow, not sinking her, but shaving off her starboard wheel; and she was out of the fight.

"Before the *Queen* could be disentangled from the wreck of the *General Lovell*, the *Beauregard* and *Van Dorn* both attacked her. Colonel Ellet fell with a ball through the knee; but as he lay on the deck, he continued to direct the fight.<sup>[9]</sup>

"The *Monarch* saw the danger which threatened the *Queen of the West*, and straight for the *Beauregard* she went, crashing into that vessel's side, and putting her out of the conflict.

"The Confederate fleet thought only of escape now. The battle drifted down the river, past the city. The gunboats joined in the chase, and but one Confederate vessel escaped. Those that had not been sunk or disabled were run on the shore on the Arkansas side and set on fire by their crews, before escaping into the swamp."

"Carl," cried Lawrence, "I would have given ten years of my life to have seen that battle, and, like you, to have been a part of it."

"Very little part I had," replied Carl, modestly, "except to fire a few shots when we were at close quarters. But after the fight—ach! Lawrence, that is something worth telling."

"What was it, Carl?"

"Toward the close of the fight, a white flag was run up in the city of Memphis. Colonel Ellet sent his son, a medical cadet, no older than yourself, Lawrence, to demand the surrender of the city. He chose three men, of whom I was one, to accompany him.

"We rowed ashore in a small boat, and landed in the midst of a howling, excited mob of thousands.

"Young Ellet handed the message which his father had written to the Mayor, and then we started for the postoffice. The mob closed in around us—four men in the midst of thousands. They cursed, they howled; they heaped upon us the most violent names; they threatened to tear us to pieces.

"We reached the postoffice, ascended to the top of the building, and began to lower the Confederate flag. A frenzy seized the crowd. They surged to and fro; they howled and gnashed their teeth like beasts of prey. Some drew revolvers and began shooting at us.

"Don't fire back," said young Ellet, coolly. "They can not hit us this high."

"The Stars and Bars came down, and the glorious Stars and Stripes arose, and as its folds unfurled to the breeze we swung our hats and gave a rousing cheer; but I do not think we were heard above the roar of the mob.

"Leaving the flag waving, we descended, and once more the mob surrounded us, snarling, cursing and howling; but a great fear kept them from tearing us to pieces.

"We walked through their midst as coolly as if we were being showered with bouquets instead of curses, and reached our boat in safety."

"It was a brave thing to do, Carl. I wouldn't have missed hearing your story for anything," said Lawrence, as he warmly shook his hand at parting.

The next day Lawrence went to bid his uncle and aunt good-bye, before starting for the front. As they talked, they were again interrupted by a newsboy crying, "Extra! Extra! All about the great battle at Corinth! Generals Price and Van Dorn whipped! The Missouri brigade annihilated!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Mr. Middleton, turning pale.

Lawrence secured a paper and gave it to him. He glanced at it and groaned. It told how Van Dorn and Price had been disastrously defeated before Corinth; how the Confederate Missouri brigade

had charged up to the very mouth of the cannon of Fort Robinette, and that but few of them were left alive.

"We must hope for the best," said Lawrence, as he looked at the stricken faces of his uncle and aunt; but he could say no more.

Mr. Middleton, with shaking limbs and halting footsteps, assisted his wife to her room.

In St. Louis that night many sat weeping, yet hoping that their loved ones were safe; for St. Louis had many a son in that battle, both on the Federal side and the Confederate.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE NEWS FROM CORINTH

All the Missourians who had enlisted in the Confederate service had been transferred to the east of the Mississippi River, and with them their beloved General, Sterling Price.

It was a bitter blow to them, for they had to leave their State overrun with Federals, and at the mercy of what they considered an inhuman foe.

The first months of their service in Mississippi had been tame. The great Federal army which had laid siege to Corinth had been divided, the Army of the Cumberland going east under Buell, and the Army of the Tennessee, under General Grant, remaining in northern Mississippi and western Tennessee. For three months there had been only desultory fighting, no great battles.

At the Confederate camp at Baldyn, Mississippi, a group of officers of the Missouri regiments were gathered in a tent, discussing the situation. In the group was Edward Middleton, the son of Alfred Middleton; Randolph Hamilton, brother of Dorothy; and last, but not least, Benton Shelley, a step-brother of Guilford Craig.

Edward Middleton had become major of his regiment. He was everywhere regarded as among the bravest and most reliable officers in Price's army. He was a bitter partisan, had the utmost contempt for everything Northern, but withal a noble and chivalric gentleman. He could never forgive Lawrence, whom he had regarded as a brother, for going into the Yankee army; yet after Lawrence had saved his life at the battle of Wilson Creek, and in so doing nearly lost his own, Edward had had a kinder feeling for him.

Randolph Hamilton was but little older than Lawrence. He was of a generous nature, fought for the South because he believed the South right, and not from any hatred toward the North. Before the war, he and Lawrence were the closest of friends, and now, although they were fighting on different sides, neither allowed that to interfere with their friendship. Randolph was now captain of his company, and idolized by his men.

Benton Shelley was of a different nature. Brave he was, but he had a haughty and cruel disposition, and believed himself to be made of finer clay than the soldiers under him. For this reason he was tyrannical, and was hated by his men as much as Randolph was loved. As for the Yankees, there were no terms too contemptuous for him to apply to them. Toward Lawrence he held undying hatred, and tried in every way to encompass his death. Toward his step-brother, Guilford Craig, he held the same hatred. He frequently boasted how, at the battle of Pea Ridge, he had slain his step-brother, and he always added: "And I'll get that Lawrence Middleton yet. See if I don't. I nearly got him at Wilson Creek, and will not fail the next time."

"It seems you did meet him again, Bent," said Randolph, with a sly twinkle in his eye; "but, like the fellow who caught the Tartar, the Tartar had him—not he the Tartar."

Benton turned white with rage. "Look here, Captain Hamilton," he exclaimed, furiously, "don't presume on our friendship too much, or I shall demand the satisfaction of a gentleman. You have already thrown that up to me several times. I have told you my horse was shot, and I was lying helpless on the ground, when that cowardly traitor attacked me, and would have murdered me if he had not been stopped by an officer more humane than he."

Major Middleton turned like a flash; his face was set and grim. "Captain Shelley," he said, in a low, even tone, but terrible in its earnestness, "I have no love for my cousin, as you well know; but he is no coward. He is a Middleton. As for his killing you in cold blood, that thought comes from your excitement of the moment and your chagrin at your overthrow. From your own account, he had every opportunity of killing you, if he had so wished."

"I thought I was among friends," said Benton, "but I see I am not, and will go."

"Hold on, gentlemen," commanded General Green, who was present; "I cannot have this—my best and bravest officers quarrelling, and threatening to shoot each other. You, Captain Hamilton, are to blame for taunting Captain Shelley for an unfortunate situation in which any of you may be placed some time. And you, Captain Shelley, are to blame for trying to mitigate your misfortune by charging your opponent with cowardice and cruelty. There is not a drop of coward's blood in a Middleton's body. There stands a noble example," and he pointed to Edward.

"I can also understand," he continued, "why Captain Shelley feels so bitter against Lawrence Middleton. He believes him to have been instrumental in leading his step-brother astray, and thus bringing a damning disgrace on his family."

"That's it!" cried Benton, eager to set himself right. "I can never forget, never forgive, the disgrace."

"That being the case," continued the General, "I trust that Captain Hamilton, even in jest, will never allude to the subject again, and that all of you will be as good friends as ever, eager only to sheathe your swords in the bosom of our enemy. That reminds me that I dropped in to tell you the season of inactivity is over."

"What!" they all cried, everything else forgotten. "Are we to fight at last?"

"It looks like it," answered Green. "You know Bragg is sweeping everything before him in Kentucky—will be in Louisville before a week. The point is to keep Grant from rushing any of his troops to aid Buell. The Yankee troops here must be held. The orders are to make it lively for Rosecrans. We are to move on Iuka tomorrow."

Then from those officers went up a cheer. They were to meet the foes of their country; no thought of the danger before them; no thought that before many hours some of them might be lying in bloody graves.

"Here's for old Kentucky!" cried one. "We are going to reinforce Bragg."

"Better say we are going to thrash Rosecrans at Corinth," chimed in another.

That night Price with his army marched straight for Iuka, some fifteen or twenty miles east of Corinth. The place was only held by a small detachment, which beat a hasty retreat, leaving a large quantity of military stores to the jubilant Confederates.

From Iuka Price could cross over into Tennessee, and pursue his way northward to join Bragg, or turn on Rosecrans at Corinth.

It was decided for him: Rosecrans no sooner learned that Price had captured Iuka than he set forth from Corinth to attack him.

Portions of the two armies met two miles from Iuka, a bloody battle was fought, the Federals being driven back a short distance, and losing a battery.

During the night Price beat a hasty retreat, leaving the battery he had taken, all his dead unburied, and many of his sick and wounded.

The Missouri brigade was not up in time to take part in this battle, and when they learned a retreat had been ordered, both officers and men were furious.

"I feel like breaking my sword!" exclaimed Major Middleton, and his jaws came together with a snap.

"Why did General Price do it?" cried Randolph Hamilton, tears of humiliation running down his face.

"You will know in time," replied Benton Shelley. He was on General Price's staff, and was the officer who had brought the orders to retreat.

The fact was, General Price knew if he did not retreat he would be soundly whipped the next day. Then, General Price had just received a communication from General Van Dorn that he was ready to join him, and, with the combined armies, make an attack on Corinth.

The news that they were to attack Corinth fired the army with enthusiasm, and eagerly did they go forward to what they thought was certain victory. The Missouri regiments marched with song and cheer, as if going to a festival. The time they had longed for had come; they were to wipe out the disgrace of Pea Ridge; they would show the rest of the army what Pop Price and his boys could do.

At noon on October third the battle opened, and now around the little village of Corinth, where in the spring it was thought the great battle of the war would be fought, was waged a most desperate conflict, lasting for two days. The hills trembled, and the very heavens seemed shattered with the thunder of artillery.

Thickets were swept as with a great jagged scythe by the leaden hail which swept through them. Nothing could withstand the fierce rush of the Confederate troops. The Federals were swept from their outer line of intrenchments.

With yells of victory, the Confederates rushed on. Before them was the second and stronger line of intrenchments. They were met with a storm of shot and shell. The carnage was awful, and the charging columns halted, staggered, and then began to reel back. Most of the officers of the Missouri regiments had fallen, killed or wounded. Both the colonel and lieutenant-colonel of the regiment to which Edward Middleton belonged had fallen.

Major Middleton spurred his horse in front of his men, and, waving his sword over his head, shouted: "Forward, men! Forward, for the honor of Missouri! I will lead you!"



The reeling column straightened, grew firm, and with a shout sprang forward.

Major Middleton's horse fell; but, sword in hand, he pressed forward, followed by his men. Nothing could stay them, and soon their shouts of victory were heard above the roar of the battle.

The line was taken, the Federals in full retreat for their last and strongest line of works, which ran around the edge of the little village.

Night had come, and the Confederates, flushed with victory, lay on the ground they had so bravely won—to complete, in the morning, as they supposed, the destruction of Rosecrans's army.

When morning came, the Confederates once more rushed to the conflict. Again did Major Middleton lead his regiment. The color-bearer went down, but the flag was seized by Randolph Hamilton, and held aloft. "Follow the colors!" he shouted, as he sprang forward.

The Federals shrank from the advancing line of steel, and fled in dismay.

As Randolph mounted the breastwork, a young Federal lieutenant, the last to leave the works, levelled his revolver on him, but as he did so a look of surprise came over his face, and he turned his weapon and shot a soldier who had sprung on the works by Randolph's side.

Randolph did not return the shot. The young lieutenant was Leon Laselle, the brother of Lola.

Everywhere along the front of Green's division the wild cheers of victory were ringing. Not only had they swept the Federal breastworks, but forty cannon had been captured. Oh, it was good! It was glorious! But it was no time to stop and rejoice. The Yankees must be completely crushed—Rosecrans's whole army captured; and into the village they followed the fleeing but not demoralized Federals.

Into the houses, and behind every garden fence and hedge, the retreating Federals gathered. Every house became a flaming fort, and into the advancing ranks of the Confederates was poured a storm of balls, while the loud-mouthed cannon swept away with an iron hail the front of the advancing foe.

The Confederates wavered, halted; then there sprang forward a line of blue-coated soldiers, and as a great wave bears on its crest everything before it, so did this line of blue bear back the Confederates. In vain did Edward Middleton struggle before it. He was as helpless as a log of wood borne onward by the surging tide.

Randolph Hamilton once more seized the standard of the regiment. "Let us die with it floating," he cried. As he cried, the hand of a Federal lieutenant reached out to grasp the flag, and then both went down, and Randolph Hamilton and Leon Laselle lay side by side, the blood stained flag between them.

On rolled the wave of blue, catching and flinging back hundreds of the fleeing Confederates.

The armies of Van Dorn and Price that had had no thought but victory, that had fought so bravely and won so much, now fled from the field in wild confusion, leaving behind them over a thousand of their dead, hundreds of their wounded, and nearly three thousand prisoners. They had fought as only brave men can fight—and lost.

Throughout the North the name of Rosecrans, before but little known, was on every tongue.<sup>[10]</sup>

It was the news of this battle that caused such excitement in St. Louis, for in it hundreds of Missourians had met Missourians, and as we have seen, the first news was that the Confederate regiments of Missouri had been annihilated. Excitement was at fever heat, and anxious hearts awaited authentic news. It came in a telegram from Leon Laselle, reading: "Am seriously but not dangerously wounded. Randolph Hamilton dangerously wounded, and captured. Edward Middleton safe."

Lawrence was at the Laselle home when the telegram came. Mr. Laselle was sick at the time and unable to go to his son, if he had wished. When the telegram was read Lola clasped her hands and cried, with tears streaming down her face, "Leon wounded! I must go to him."

"I am afraid that is hardly possible," said Lawrence. "I will see what can be done, but first let me take this telegram to my uncle and aunt. It will take a great load from their minds."

When the telegram was read to Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, they both dropped to their knees and thanked God their son was safe. Days afterwards, when the news came of his bravery, and how he had been promoted to the colonelcy of his regiment, they, in their pride, forgot the agony they had suffered.

As for Lawrence, he hastened back to Mr. Laselle's.

"I must go to Leon," Lola cried. "There is no one else to go."

Lawrence showed her how impossible it was for her to go. "I will see General Schofield," he said. "Perhaps I can manage to get permission to go."

"Oh! do, do," cried Lola, and the whole family echoed her wish.

"There is Randolph," said Lawrence. "The telegram says he is dangerously wounded."

"In my anxiety over Leon, I forgot Randolph," said Lola. "What a pity! His mother and Dorothy both in Europe, and Mr. Hamilton somewhere east. Why not—" she stopped, and added lamely, "I am so sorry for him."

"We are all sorry, Lola," replied Lawrence. "Randolph is a noble fellow, and believes he is doing his duty both to his God and his country in fighting as he does. You may rest assured I will do all I can for him."

Lawrence had no trouble in getting the requisite authority from General Schofield to visit his friend. "I shall not be ready to take the field yet for some days," said the General. "So take your time."

Lawrence went from St. Louis to Memphis by steamboat and from Memphis to Corinth by rail. Once the train was fired into by Confederate raiders. There were quite a number of soldiers on board and Lawrence, placing himself at their head, succeeded, after a brisk little fight, in driving the raiding party off. But the track had been torn up and there was a delay of several hours, a delay under which Lawrence chafed, for he was anxious to get to his friend.

At length Corinth was reached. All signs of the battle had been obliterated, except the shattered houses, the mangled forest and thickets and row upon row of new-made graves.

To his joy, Lawrence found Leon improving. He had not only been shot through the arm, the arm he had stretched forth to seize the flag, but had also received a scalp wound.

Lawrence would not have known him with his head all swathed up, if he had not been pointed out to him. The meeting between the two friends was a joyful one.

"How are the folks and how did they take my being wounded?" was Leon's first question.

And thus it is. The first thought of a soldier as he sinks dying or wounded on the battlefield is of home and the loved ones.

Lawrence told him and added, "Lola was crazy to come to you, but you know it could not be."

"I reckon there would be another one besides me glad to see Lola," said Leon. "Poor Randolph, he lies on the third cot, there. Don't go to him, he seems to be asleep, and he needs rest. The surgeons cut the ball from his thigh yesterday. It had lodged against the bone. They have hopes of his recovery now, if blood poisoning does not set in. He has been delirious most of the time, and what do you think? He is continually raving about Lola. Seems to be living over again the time he was pursued as a spy, and would have been captured if it had not been for her."

Somehow it gave Lawrence a little pang to hear this, then he cast the thought out as unworthy.

When Randolph awoke, Lawrence went to him, pressed his hand in sympathy and whispered that everything was all right, and not to talk. Randolph smiled and, closing his eyes, went to sleep again.

The doctor came and looked at him. "Friend of yours?" he asked of Lawrence.

Lawrence nodded.

"Mighty plucky fellow. Had a close call, but I think he will pull through. Fever's most gone," exclaimed the doctor as he felt Randolph's pulse and then hurried away.

Lawrence and Leon held a consultation that night, and it was determined that if they could get Randolph paroled they would take him back to St. Louis with them, for Leon had already been granted a furlough.

The parole was easily secured, but a week passed before they considered it safe to move Randolph. The journey back was safely made and Leon, in spite of his bandaged head and wounded arm, was nearly smothered with kisses.

Lawrence found that Mr. Hamilton had not yet returned; in fact, he had met with an accident, and it would be several days before he could travel. What was to be done with Randolph? That was the question.

"Bring him with me," said Leon. "I want someone to fight with while I am getting well, and fighting with tongues is not as dangerous as with guns."

"Where are you taking me? This is not home," exclaimed Randolph, as the ambulance stopped before the Laselle residence.

"No," replied Lawrence. "Your father has met with a slight accident, not severe, but enough to detain him for several days. So we have brought you to Mr. Laselle's. Leon wants you for company. You two can fight your battles over while you are convalescing."

"But—"

"Not a word. Just think of what a nurse you will have. I almost wish I was in your place."

Randolph smiled and made no more protestations.

Lawrence could hardly help envying Randolph, who had found a haven of rest for at least some weeks, while he must once more face the hardships and dangers of the tented field.

The orders came in a couple of days and Lawrence went to say good-bye to his friends.

He found Leon and Randolph had been placed in one room, and there they lay, Union and Confederate, side by side, as they had lain on the battlefield, but now no blood-stained flag lay between them.

Lawrence watched as Lola, with gentle hands, administered to Randolph's wants. He saw how his face lighted up as she came near, and—well, he didn't like it.

When it came time for him to go and Lola followed him to the door, he said in a tone of carelessness, "Lola, as you have not only Leon, but Randolph to look after now, I suppose you do not care to hear from me any more."

The girl looked at him in surprise and tears gathered in her eyes. "Lawrence, what do you mean?" she asked in a trembling voice. "Are you not my own, my true knight-errant?"

"There, Lola, I was only joking. Of course, I am your knight-errant," answered Lawrence hastily, "and my Lady of Beauty must not forget me. God bless you, Lola." He raised her hand to his lips and was gone.

Lola gazed after him with troubled eyes, and then a thought, a thought that had never entered her head before, came. The color in her cheeks came and went. "He couldn't have meant that," she murmured, as she looked at his retreating figure until it was out of sight. Then with a sigh she turned and went into the house.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### PORTER CAPTURES PALMYRA

With the disastrous defeats and scattering of the guerrilla bands of Poindexter, Cobb and Porter, it looked as if Northeast Missouri was, at last, free from partisan warfare, but such did not prove to be the case. Porter had escaped, and was soon back in his old haunts, gathering together as many of his followers as possible.

Harry Semans reported this fact to McNeil, who had now been appointed general in the Missouri militia. That officer could hardly believe that Porter would be able to gather a force large enough to do much damage, but he bade Harry be watchful and report at the first signs of danger.

"Hist! Bruno, keep quiet!"

It was Harry Semans, who was once more lying in a thicket by the side of the road, and as usual the faithful Bruno was by his side. The dog was now showing that he scented danger.

Harry's method of scouting was peculiar. When in need of information he and Bruno generally scouted alone, and that during the night.

In the daytime he would lie concealed in some thicket, close to a road, his horse always picketed some distance from him. He would observe any men that passed along the road, the direction they were going, and thus be able to determine whether the guerrillas were gathering for a raid or not. If so, it was his duty to find their rendezvous, report with all possible speed, and bring a Federal force down upon them.

When he thought best, he had no scruples in passing himself off as a guerrilla. It was only in case of urgent necessity that he rode in the daytime. For one reason he did not wish the guerrillas to know he was always accompanied by a dog. In the night he could not be recognized, and he was never in fear of a surprise, for Bruno always gave warning.

To the guerrillas it was a matter of wonderment how the Federals so often found out their secret hiding places, and many a suspected Union man was accused of giving information, and suffered in consequence, when it was Harry who was the guilty party.

Feeling safe, McNeil had left only one small company in Palmyra to guard the place, and to protect the prisoners, of whom he had nearly a hundred. He was away looking after other posts in his territory.

The news of McNeil's absence and the small number of soldiers at Palmyra was borne to Porter and he determined to make a raid on the village, liberate the prisoners, and capture some of the Union citizens who had made themselves obnoxious to Porter and his gang.

The news was given out and the guerrillas were rallying at a given place in the western part of the county. It was this gathering of the guerrillas that Harry was now watching.

He quickly quieted the dog and the cause of his excitement was now apparent, for six men came riding past, all armed to the teeth.

"There is devilry on foot, old fellow," whispered Harry to Bruno, "and it 's up to us to find out what it is. There's twenty of these villains ridden past since we've been hiding here."

"How I wish I could hear what they are saying," continued Harry. "I must, I *will* find out what's brewing."

Harry was in a place which he could not safely leave before night, so he waited impatiently for the coming darkness. As soon as he dared he made his way back to where he had left his horse, and cautiously led it to the road. He then mounted and rode in the direction the guerrillas had taken. Two or three times Bruno gave warning, and Harry quietly drew out by the side of the road and let men pass.

He had gone some two or three miles when he came to a main road leading to Palmyra. Bruno showed unusual excitement, and Harry stopped and listened intently. From up the road there came the sound of the trampling of horses, as if a large body of cavalry was coming.

"Quick, Bruno, we must get out of this," exclaimed Harry, and wheeling his horse he rode back a short distance. Then he rode into a clump of bushes where he dismounted and tied the horse. "I dare not leave you too near the road when that cavalry passes, you might give me away," he said, patting his horse's neck. "Bruno, you stay here."

Back on the run went Harry. Climbing a fence he quickly made his way to the road over which the cavalry must pass. Here a fence ran close to the road and the corners were overgrown with weeds and brush, making a safe hiding place.

He was none too soon. Six men came riding by. "An advance guard," muttered Harry.

In a short time the head of the column appeared, and in front rode two men. As they came abreast of Harry he heard one of them say, "What time do you expect to attack Palmyra, Colonel?"

"Just at daybreak." It was the voice of Colonel Porter that answered.

Harry breathed hard. It was Palmyra that was to be attacked, and he knew the weakness of the garrison. He calculated as closely as he could the number that passed, and concluded there must be about four hundred in the band.

What was he to do? The whole force was squarely between him and Palmyra. He could never get through that body of men. He must ride around. But would he have time? Could he find his way in the darkness? He could try.

Harry waited until the last man had passed, then going back he mounted his horse and followed the band. So close was he after them that three or four stragglers overtook him, and taking him for one of their number, told him to hurry up or he would be too late for the fun.

"My hoss is plumb tired out," was Harry's answer, "but I reckon I will git thar in time."

After riding three or four miles Harry came to a road that he believed might enable him to get around Porter's force, and by hard riding get to Palmyra first and give warning. Taking the road he put his horse to a fast gallop. Two or three times he was hailed as he passed houses, but he dashed on regardless of the fact that a bullet might be sent after him.

He soon became aware that the road was taking him away instead of in the direction he wished to go. He brought his horse down to a walk.

"I'm afraid it's all up," he sighed, "but I will never cease trying until all hope is gone."

Keeping a sharp lookout he soon came to a road that ran in the direction he wished to go. True the road seemed but little traveled, but it was his only hope, so he turned into it, and again urged his horse forward.

The road twisted and turned and Harry soon lost all idea of direction. Worse than all, it grew fainter and fainter and soon became little more than a trail. Harry felt himself hopelessly lost. He knew not where he was, nor in what direction he wanted to go, but he knew by the woods which bordered the trail he must be near a stream.

Soon he came to a clearing, in the middle of which stood a rough log house. There was a light burning in the house, and before it a horse stood saddled and bridled, and Harry noticed that a shotgun lay across the saddle.

Though he knew it was risky he determined to stop and find out where he was and to inquire the shortest way to Palmyra. Hitching his horse and telling Bruno to keep out of sight, but near him, he carefully made his way to the house. He soon became satisfied it was tenanted only by a man and woman; if there were children they were asleep.

The man kept coming to the door and looking out as if he expected some one. Harry saw he was a sinister looking fellow, and that he wore a belt which held in place a huge revolver. Harry waited until the man had closed the door after one of his visits, and then marching boldly up he gave a short rap.

The door was immediately opened and the man he had seen exclaimed, "Hello, Steve, yo' un air late." When he saw Harry he stopped and his hand went to his belt, "Who be yo' un," he growled, "and what do yo' un want?"

"Don't be alarmed, pard," laughed Harry. "I reckon yo' un and I air in the same class. I'm from

Shelby an' on my way to join Porter. Yo' un knows we 'uns air to make it hot for the Yanks in Palmyra. I have lost my way, an' want to know whar I kin find the direct road to Palmyra."

"Yo' un only have to foller the trail to the branch, cross it and yo' un will strike the main road. But I kalkerlate to have a hand in that little job at Palmyra myself. Have three or four debts to pay, one agin old Allsman. He reported me to McNeil as a dangerous char'ter. He'll never peach agin if I lay hands on him."

"Thank yo' un. I'll be goin'," said Harry, "or I'm afraid I'll be late."

"Hold on, pard," said the man. "I be jest waitin' for Steve and Sol Jones. We 'uns will all go together."

"Sorry I can't wait. I must be goin'," replied Harry, turning to go.

"Stop!" cried the man, hoarsely.

Harry wheeled, his hand on his revolver.

"Better not," drawled the man, with a grin. "The old woman has you kivered and she's a dead shot."

Harry glanced up. Sure enough the woman, a gaunt, muscular virago, stood in the door, a rifle at her shoulder, and Harry saw that he could look right into the muzzle.

"Ha! Ha!" chuckled the fellow, "yo' un didn't count on that, did yo' un? Fact is, I didn't take to yo' un's story and I giv' the old woman a sign to look out. If yo' un be from Shelby, how'd it happen yo' un got in this timber along the branch. Yo' un may be all right, and if yo' un air it will be no hurt for yo' un to wait and go with we 'uns. Thar, stop fingering that thar revolver, or I'll giv' the old woman the wink. Better up with yo' hands. Thar, I heah Steve and Sol comin'. If yo' un don't prove all right, we 'uns will have a hangin' bee before we 'uns start. Hands up, I tell yo' un."

Harry was still looking into the muzzle of the rifle. It seemed to him as big as a cannon. His hands slowly went up, but as they did so he gave a low, peculiar whistle. Like a flash a great black body bounded through the air and Bruno's teeth were buried in the shoulder of his victim. The force of the impact threw the fellow over, and as he fell Harry ducked.

The woman fired, but the shot went wild. In a moment Harry had wrenched the gun from her, and with a blow bent the barrel of the rifle around the door frame. But now was heard the approach of horses, and the cries of men. Steve and Sol Jones were coming, and the sound of the rifle shot had alarmed them.

"Here, Bruno, come quick," commanded Harry. But Bruno was unwilling to release his victim, and it took a hard cuff and a sharp command to make him let go. Steve and Sol were now there, excitedly crying, "What's up? What's up?"

Without a word Harry opened fire. One of the horses and the rider went down; the other wheeling his horse, was off like a shot, fortunately going the way Harry had come.

Without waiting to learn the result of his shots, Harry rushed for his horse and rode away. He reached the branch spoken of, and, crossing it, was soon on the highroad to Palmyra. But Porter and his men were still in between him and the place.

Harry now came to where he was acquainted with the country. He could ride around Porter, but it was a good six or eight miles out of his way. "I can never do it and be in time," he groaned, "but I may do some good." Again his good horse was urged to a stiff gallop.

Day was just breaking and Harry was still three miles from Palmyra, but he had got past Porter, and would enter the place from the east. He was congratulating himself that he might still be in time, when the faint echo of firearms was borne to him on the breeze. Spurring his horse forward he rode some distance, then halted and listened.

The sounds of firing were unmistakable, but the reports were scattering, not as if any considerable number of men were engaged.

Harry reached the fair grounds on the eastern edge of town. Here he unstrapped the blanket from his saddle, and carrying it into a vacant stall, said to Bruno, "Old fellow, watch that blanket until I come back."

The dog lay down by the side of the blanket, and Harry patted his head and told him to keep his eyes open, then he left him, thinking to return shortly.

Harry now rode boldly forward, thinking he would have no trouble in passing himself off as one of the guerrillas. He soon saw squads of them riding through the town and stopping at the different houses. He shuddered, for he knew Union men lived in every one of those houses.

The firing up in the center of the town now grew more severe.

"Seems as if they air havin' quite a time up thar," he said to a guerrilla whom he met.

"Yes," growled the fellow. "The Yanks have got into the court house and a brick store. Porter ordered them to surrender and they answered if he wanted them to com' an' take them. That they'd fight till the last man fell before they'd surrender. The Kunnel will find it hard work to get

them out without cannon."

Harry's heart gave a great bound. If the Federals were in the court house and a brick store, they might hold out for hours. Might he not get help from Hannibal? McNeil was at Monticello, only thirty miles away, with part of the Merrill Horse. Would it be possible to bring help to the besieged men? He would try, and he turned up a side street.

"Hullo! Whar be yo' un goin'?" asked the guerrilla.

"Thar's a feller up here aways I've got an account to settle with, an' I'll git him no matter what happens," exclaimed Harry, fiercely. Then a happy thought came to him, "Say," he asked, "didn't the Kunnel tell us whar to rally after this affair was over?"

"Yes, at Whaley's Mill," was the answer.

"Wall, I must git my man an' then I'll find yo' un," Harry answered.

On the outskirts of the village Harry met another guerrilla who told him he had better be getting back, as Porter had given up all hopes of capturing the soldiers in the court house, and they were going to gather up their booty and prisoners and evacuate the place.

"Very well," answered Harry. "Thar is one feller out heah I want to get, an' I'm goin' to get him."

"Better hurry up then," replied the guerrilla.

Porter had no idea of holding the place when he made the raid. His orders were that while some of his force should engage the soldiers at the court house, the rest should disperse through the city and arrest every Union man in the place; expressly were they ordered to find and arrest Andrew Allsman, who had made himself very obnoxious to them by acting as guide to the Union forces.

Allsman was found in bed. He was dragged out, ordered to dress himself, and taken away.

Porter expected to find a large quantity of arms and munitions of war in the place. In this he was disappointed, but he succeeded in taking the jail and liberating a number of prisoners.

One Union citizen was shot down as he stood in the door of his house.

The soldiers, in defending the court house, had a few men wounded. The guerrillas lost one killed and had several wounded.

When Porter withdrew from the place he halted on the outskirts of the village and paroled all his prisoners except four, and one of the four was Allsman.

This done he started for the appointed rendezvous at Whaley's Mill. He expected no immediate pursuit, for he knew McNeil was at Monticello.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### TEN LIVES FOR ONE

Harry succeeded in clearing the village in safety, and, when about half a mile away, halted and looked back. Porter's men were already leaving the place, and Harry saw they had quite a number of prisoners. Porter halted in an open meadow near the edge of the village, and the prisoners were gathered together.

"My God!" groaned Harry. "Are they going to murder them all?"

But the prisoners were not murdered. They were all paroled with the exception of four, to whom allusion has been made.

Harry watched until he saw the paroled men start back to the village, and the guerrillas riding away. He drew a long breath of relief. The fact was, McNeil held so many of Porter's men prisoners that the guerrilla chieftain dare not command such wholesale murder.

"What is to be done now?" asked Harry of himself. "I know," he cried suddenly. "If I can make Monticello before night, McNeil can get to Whaley's Mill nearly as quickly as Porter. I'll make Monticello or die in the attempt."

Thus saying, he turned his horse to the north and rode swiftly away. He had gone some distance when he suddenly drew rein. "Great guns!" he exclaimed. "I have forgotten Bruno. He will stay by that blanket until he starves."

He reined in his horse and sat a moment in deep thought. "It's no use," he sighed. "It's full five miles. I can never go back and make Monticello in time. Poor Bruno! I won't let him suffer for more than a day or two."

His mind made up, Harry rode on at as swift a pace as his horse could stand. Residents along the road gazed in wonder as Harry dashed past. Most of them took him for a guerrilla fleeing from

his foes, and looked in vain for blue-coated pursuers. A number hailed him and two or three sent a ball after him on receiving no answer.

When about half way to Monticello three rough-looking men blocked the road, demanding his name and the reason of his haste.

"I'm carrying the news to the boys," he explained. "Porter captured Palmyra this morning."

"Yo' un don't say. But who air yo' un carryin' the news to?"

"To Sam Dodds. Porter wanted him to rally all the boys he could and join him at Whaley's Mill."

This was a guess by Harry. He only knew Dodds was a leader among the guerrillas in that section of the country.

"That's a lie. Sam Dodds is with Porter and—" The guerrilla never got further. Harry's revolver cracked and the fellow rolled from his horse. Bending low over his horse's neck, Harry was off like a shot.

For a moment the other two guerrillas were dazed by the unlooked-for attack, then drawing their revolvers sent ball after ball after Harry, who, as they fired, felt a sharp pain in his left arm, but he only urged his horse to greater speed.

One of the guerrillas sprang from his horse and went to his fallen companion. "Dead as a doornail," he exclaimed. "Shot through the heart. Jack, let's after that boy. I reckon one of us winged him, for I saw him winch. We 'uns can come back and see to poor Collins heah, after we catch him. I reckon that young devil was the famous boy scout of the Merrill Hoss. I've heard Porter say he'd give a thousand dollars for him dead or alive."

Without further parley, leaving their dead companion lying in the road, the two guerrillas mounted their horses and started in pursuit. Harry by this time had gained a good lead, but the guerrillas' horses were fresh, and they gained on him rapidly. As dark as it now looked for Harry, his being pursued proved to be his salvation, for he had not gone more than two miles when six guerrillas blocked the road.

"Halt and give an account of yo'self!" they cried.

Without checking his horse, Harry shouted, "Yanks! Yanks!"

The guerrillas saw the cloud of dust raised by Harry's pursuers and wheeling their horses fled with him. Harry now had company he did not relish, but not for long. Coming to a cross road which led into a wood they turned into it crying out to Harry to do the same, but to their amazement he kept right on.

"Reckon he's so skeered he didn't notice," said one.

"Hold," said another, "thar's only two comin' an' they don't look like Yanks. If they be, we 'uns can tend to them."

Drawing their weapons they waited for the two to come up, when they found they were two of their own gang. Explanations were made and there were curses loud and deep.

"We 'uns air losing time," cried one of the first two. "The feller's hoss must be badly winded. We 'uns can catch him."

The leader of the six shook his head. "No," he exclaimed, with an oath, "it's all off. Thar is a scouting party of Yanks up the road. They chased us. That's the reason we 'uns are down heah. That feller will fall in with them before we 'uns can ketch him."

So, much to their chagrin, the guerrillas gave up the chase and went to attend to their dead comrade.

About five miles from Monticello Harry overtook the scouting party, now on their way back to that city. Taking Harry for a guerrilla, they ordered him to surrender, which he did very willingly.

Harry was white with dust, blood was dripping from his left hand and his horse, white with foam, stood trembling.

The lieutenant in charge of the party rode up. "Well, young man," he began, then stopped and gazed in wonder.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed. "It's Harry Semans. Harry, what's up?"

"Porter is on the warpath. He has captured Palmyra," gasped Harry.

The news was astounding.

"When?" cried the lieutenant.

"This morning. But I have no time to talk. Give me a fresh horse. I must see McNeil."

"But your hand, my boy. Let me send one of the boys with the news."

"No, no!" cried Harry. "I must see McNeil. The wound is nothing. It is nothing but a scratch."

Harry took a horse from one of the troop, and accompanied by the lieutenant and three men rode post-haste for Monticello, leaving the troop to come more leisurely.

General McNeil was greatly surprised by the news. He had supposed Porter's band to be entirely dispersed.

"You say the garrison did not surrender?" asked McNeil.

"No, but Porter plundered the town and took every Union man in the place prisoner. From what I could see he paroled all, or most of them."

"God help Andrew Allsman if they captured him," exclaimed McNeil; "but if Porter dares—" The General said no more, but his jaws came together with a snap.

Harry now told the whole story and ended with: "General, they are to rendezvous at Whaley's Mill. You can catch them if you act promptly. It's not much farther to Whaley's Mill from here than it is from Palmyra; and Porter has no idea you can get there nearly as quickly as he."

McNeil lost no time. Fortunately there was a battalion of the Merrill Horse at Monticello, and he could muster five hundred men for the pursuit.

"I wish you could be with us," said the General to Harry.

"I certainly shall be," answered Harry.

"But your wound, and thirty-six hours without sleep or rest," said the General.

"My wound is nothing," said Harry, "but that reminds me it has not been dressed, and that I am nearly famished, but I will be ready as soon as you are."

"Only cut deep enough to make it bleed freely," said the surgeon, as he dressed Harry's arm. "You will be all right in a week."

"I'm all right now, except a lame arm and an empty stomach," laughed Harry, "and I will attend to the stomach now."

It was not long before McNeil, at the head of five hundred stout troopers, was on his way to Whaley's Mill, every man eager for the conflict. But as Harry rode there came to him the thought of Bruno. His first impulse was to turn back and ride for Palmyra, but he knew how dangerous it would be, and then he felt his duty was to continue with McNeil. It would not make more than a day's difference, and if he started alone, the probabilities were he would never get to Palmyra, so with a heavy heart he rode on.

All through the night they rode. Porter, never dreaming McNeil could reach him so quickly, went into camp at Whaley's Mill to await supplies and reinforcements.

The next day McNeil was on him like a thunderbolt. Never was there a surprise more complete. Many of the guerrillas cut the halters of their horses and without saddles or bridles galloped furiously away. Frequently two men were seen on one horse, digging in their heels and urging him to the utmost speed.

The relentless Merrill Horse were after them, cutting, shooting and taking prisoners those who threw down their arms and begged for mercy. For two days the pursuit was kept up, and at last in desperation Porter cried to the men who had kept with him, "Every man for himself." And every man for himself it was. The band was totally dispersed.

When Porter saw all hope was lost, he paroled three of the four prisoners he had kept; but Andrew Allsman was held, and from that day all authentic news of him ceases.<sup>[11]</sup>

Porter did not rally his band; he collected as many as he could and fled south into Arkansas, where he held a commission as colonel in a regiment of provisional troops. Owing to this pursuit six days had elapsed before Harry could get back to Palmyra. During this period the thought of Bruno keeping his lonely watch over that blanket caused Harry many a sharp pain. More than once he thought of deserting and going to the relief of the animal. Those of the officers who knew the story laughed at Harry's fears, saying no dog would stay and watch a blanket until he starved, but Harry knew better.

Upon reaching Palmyra he rode with all haste to the fair grounds where he had left Bruno. He found the dog lying with his head and forepaws on the blanket, his eyes closed. So still he lay, so gaunt he looked, that Harry's heart gave a great bound; he feared he was dead. But the moment Harry's footsteps were heard, Bruno gave a hoarse growl and staggered to his feet, every hair on his back bristling. But no sooner did he see who it was than he gave a joyful bark and attempted to spring forward to meet him, but fell from weakness.

In a moment Harry's arms were around his neck and he was weeping like a child. The dog licked his hands and his face in an ecstasy of joy.

"Bruno, Bruno, to love me like this, after I left you to starve and die," sobbed Harry, "but I couldn't help it, if the guerrillas had seen you they would never have let you live. They would rather have your life than mine, and Bruno you are worth a dozen of me."

If ever a dog was cared for and fed tidbits, it was Bruno, and in a few days he showed no signs of



his fast.

The taking of Palmyra was a humiliating affair to General McNeil. That the town in which he made his headquarters should be raided, every Union citizen in it captured, one shot down and another carried off, and in all probability murdered, was a bitter pill for him to swallow.

He had often declared that if any more murders were committed in his district he would shoot ten guerrillas for every man murdered. Had the time come for him to make that threat good?

McNeil was not naturally a cruel man; to his friends he was one of the kindest and most generous of men, but to his foes he was relentless. He believed that the guerrillas of Missouri had broken every law of civilized warfare, and were entitled to no mercy. But now that the time had come for him to make his threats good, he hesitated. He arose and paced his room. "No, no," he murmured, "I cannot do it. There must be some way out of it."

Just then his provost marshal, Colonel W. R. Strachan, entered the room. Strachan was a coarse featured man and his heavy jaw showed him to be a man of determined will. His countenance showed marks of dissipation, for he was a heavy drinker, and this served to further brutalize his nature. That he was cruel could be seen in every lineament of his face. But he was a man of marked executive ability, and when occasion demanded he wielded a facile and ready pen. His defence of McNeil in a New York paper showed him to be a man possessing ability of the highest order.

Such was the man who came into the presence of McNeil at this critical moment. He stood and regarded McNeil as if he would read his very thoughts, and then remarked, cynically, "I haven't seen anything of that proclamation of yours yet, General."

McNeil started as if stung. He hesitated and then said, "Strachan, I can't make up my mind. It seems so cold blooded."

"The Rebels say you dare not," sneered Strachan.

McNeil flushed. "I allow no man to question my courage," he answered hotly.

"Pardon me, General, it is not your physical courage they question. That is above criticism. It is your moral courage, the courage to do right, because it wrings your heart to do right. You feel for the ten men you doom to die, but, Great God! look at their crimes. Does not the blood of the Union men murdered by Porter's gang cry for vengeance? Think of that. Think of Carter, and Preston, and Pratt, and Spieres, and Carnegy, and Aylward—but why enumerate every one of these men murdered by these assassins. Now they come and, right under our very eyes, carry off Allsman, to be foully dealt with—and yet General McNeil hesitates."<sup>[12]</sup>

"Say no more, Strachan," cried McNeil, "the proclamation will be forthcoming."

A cruel smile played around the lips of Strachan as he saluted his superior and departed.

The next morning a proclamation appeared, directed to Joseph C. Porter, saying that if Andrew Allsman was not returned before the end of ten days ten of his followers held as prisoners would be taken out and shot.

The proclamation was posted on the door of the court house and soon a motley crowd gathered around to read it. Some read it with satisfaction, some with lowering brows, but the most with jeers.

"McNeil will never do it. It's only a bluff," declared a sullen-looking man.

A tall, lank, cadaverous native ejected a mouthful of tobacco juice and drawled, "Directed to Joe Porter, is it? That's a mistake; the General should have directed it to the devil. He's the only one who can return ole Allsman."

"Think so, do you?" said a soldier, who, overhearing the remark, laid a heavy hand on the fellow's shoulder. "Come along with me."

Protesting vehemently, the fellow was taken to prison. This episode ended public criticism.

There were not many in Palmyra who believed Porter could return Allsman if he wanted to; the universal belief was that he had been murdered. What would McNeil do when the man was not returned, was the question. The general belief was that the proclamation was only a bluff to try and scare Porter; so the people of Palmyra went about their business disregarding the ominous cloud hanging over them.

As the days slipped by and Allsman was not returned and no explanation made, McNeil began to be uneasy. He caused the proclamation to be made throughout all Northeast Missouri. He even sent Harry on a dangerous ride to deliver a copy to the wife of Porter, and to beg her to get a copy to her husband, if she knew where he was.

She replied she did not know where he was. The fact was, Porter had fled south, as has been noted, but McNeil did not know this.

No representations were made to McNeil that Allsman had been paroled by Porter, as was afterwards claimed by Porter and his friends, and that he was afterwards murdered by unknown parties. His proclamation was utterly ignored.

The ninth day arrived and Strachan sought his chief. "Well," he growled, "the time is up tomorrow and Allsman has not been returned. He will not be. We might as well prepare for the execution."

"Is there any way out of this, Strachan?" asked McNeil, with much feeling. "I hate this."

"Going to show the white feather?" sneered Strachan.

"No, but what if I issue a proclamation that if the men who actually murdered Allsman are given up these ten men will be spared?"

"They will pay just as much attention to it as they did to your first proclamation," said Strachan. "General, if you do not carry out your proclamation there is not a Union man in the State whose life will be safe, and their blood will be on your hands. You will be cursed by every loyal citizen, and your enemies will despise you as a coward. Better, far better, you had never issued any proclamation."

McNeil felt the force of Strachan's reasoning. It would have been better if no proclamation had been made. To go back on it, and at the eleventh hour, would proclaim him weak and vacillating, and the effect might be as Strachan said.

"Go ahead, Strachan. I will not interfere," he said abruptly, and turned away.

Strachan departed highly elated, and repaired to a carpenter shop, where he ordered ten rough coffins made. The village suddenly awoke to the fact that the execution would take place. Then faces grew pale, and all jeering ceased. McNeil was besieged by applicants imploring him to stay the execution. Among these were a number of Union men. But McNeil remained obdurate; his mind was made up.

Strachan picked out ten men among the prisoners and they were told that on the morrow they must die. Why Strachan picked the ten men he did will never be known. They were not chosen by lot.

Among the ten men was a William S. Humphrey. Mrs. Humphrey had arrived in Palmyra the evening before the execution, not knowing her husband was to die. When told of his fate she was horrified, and in the early morning she sought Strachan to plead for his life, but was rudely repulsed. Then with tottering footsteps she wended her way to the headquarters of General McNeil. He received her kindly, but told her he would not interfere.

Half fainting she was borne from the room. Her little nine-year-old daughter had accompanied her as far as the door. Catching sight of the child, she cried with tears streaming down her face, "Go, child, go to General McNeil, kneel before him and with uplifted hands beg him to spare your father. Tell him what a good man he is. How he had refused to go with Porter after he had taken the oath."

The little girl obeyed. She made her way to General McNeil; she knelt before him; she raised her little hands imploringly; with the tears streaming down her face she sobbed, "Oh, General McNeil, don't have papa shot. He never will be bad any more. He promised and he will not break that promise. Don't have him shot. Think of me as your little girl pleading for your life."

She could say no more, but lay sobbing and moaning at his feet. The stern man trembled like a leaf; tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

"Poor child! Poor child!" he murmured, as he gently raised her. Then turning to his desk he wrote an order and, handing it to an officer, said, "Take that to Colonel Strachan."

The order read:

COLONEL STRACHAN:

If the fact can be established that Humphrey was in Palmyra when Porter was here and refused to leave, reprieve him and put no one in his place.

McNEIL.

When the order was delivered to Colonel Strachan he raved like a madman. He had had ten coffins made, and though the heavens fell, they should be filled. Like Shylock, he demanded his pound of flesh.

"For God's sake!" said Captain Reed to Strachan, "if you must have the tenth victim, take a single man."

Strachan stalked to the prison and glancing over the prisoners called out, "Hiram Smith."

A young man, twenty-two years of age, stepped forward.

"Is your name Hiram Smith?" asked Strachan.

"It is," was the answer.

"You are to be shot this afternoon."

The young man drew himself up, gazed blankly at Strachan for a moment, and then without a

word turned and walked across the room to where a bucket of water was standing. Taking a drink he turned around with the remark, "I can die just as easily as I took that drink of water." And this young man knew he had but two hours to live.<sup>[13]</sup>

The time came and amid the groans and sobs of the populace, the ten men were taken to the fair grounds, where seated on their coffins, they bravely faced their executioners.

The firing squad consisted of thirty soldiers, three to a man. A few hundred pale faced spectators looked on. The fatal order was given and the volley rang out.

From the spectators there burst a cry of horror. Strong men turned away, unable to look. Many of the firing squad were nervous and their aim was bad; others had shot high on purpose—they had no heart in the work. Of the ten men, only three had been killed outright. Six lay on the ground, writhing in agony; one sat on his coffin, untouched.

"Take your revolvers and finish the job," thundered Strachan.

Harry, who had witnessed the scene, fled from it in horror, as did most of the spectators. It was a scene that those who lived in Palmyra will never forget. The fair grounds was never again used as such. It was a place accursed.<sup>[14]</sup>

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## CHAPTER XV

### A GIRL OF THE OZARKS

In one of the loveliest valleys in the heart of the Ozarks lived Judge Marion Chittenden. He was the youngest son of a Kentucky pioneer, one who did much in the building up of that commonwealth when it was known as "The Dark and Bloody Ground."

In his youth, Marion Chittenden—that was not his name then—was wild and wayward, and became involved in numerous brawls and personal encounters. When about twenty years of age, in a drunken brawl he shot and killed one of his best friends. Filled with horror, and knowing the consequences of his crime, he fled. Although a large reward was offered for his apprehension, all efforts to find him proved unavailing. As years passed and nothing was heard from him, his relatives breathed sighs of relief and considered him as one dead.

The fact was, he had fled beyond the Mississippi and became lost in the wilds of Missouri. Here he changed his name, and no one ever knew but that he always had been Marion Chittenden.

In the Ozarks he made his living by hunting and fishing, and for some years lived almost the life of a hermit. In one particular his crime made him a changed man; from the moment he fled he never touched another drop of liquor.

One day while hunting he came across a lovely valley. Through it ran a purling stream, its waters as clear as crystal. Around and about the valley the hills rose to a height of from five to eight hundred feet, clothed to their tops in a forest of living green.

When he first saw the valley it was from the top of one of the hills where he had trailed and shot a bear. As he stood and looked, the scene was so peaceful, so beautiful, that a longing for rest came over him. The wild and wandering life he had led for years all at once palled upon him. The memory of his childhood came like a flood. His waywardness, his crime, arose before him with startling distinctness. He was naturally a lover of the refinements of civilization, and the rough, lonely life he had led was the result of his crime, not of inclination.

Standing there, he suddenly exclaimed, "Here will I make my home; here will I forget the past; here will I begin a new life."

He descended into the valley, startling a herd of deer that bounded into the forest which clothed the hills. But they need not have been afraid—for the time being he had lost the instinct of a hunter.

He stood by the side of the little river, its clear waters showing the fish darting to and fro, as if in wanton play. A little back was a knoll crowned with noble trees. "Here," thought he, "will I build my house. Here will I begin my new life. It is beautiful. The stream is beautiful. It shall be called La Belle, and this the valley of La Belle." And the valley of La Belle it became.

He went to St. Louis and preëmpted the land, for he had no fears the rough, bearded hunter would be taken for the immaculate young dandy who had fled from Kentucky.

He built him a home; the range of thousands of acres of land was his, and his flocks grew and flourished. Time passed, and other settlers began to invade the seclusion of the Ozarks.

One day there came into the hills a man by the name of Garland. He had seen better days, but had become impoverished and fled to the Ozarks, thinking that in that wilderness he might make a home, and in a measure retrieve his fortune. His family consisted of his wife and one daughter, a young lady about twenty years of age.

Mr. Garland settled some miles from where Chittenden lived his lonely life; but in a wilderness those who live miles away are considered neighbors. Mr. Chittenden visited them, and, though charmed by the beauty of the daughter, he had no thoughts of giving up his bachelor life.

But misfortune seemed to have followed Mr. Garland. He had not been there a year before his wife died, and in a few months he followed her.

Before this Mr. Chittenden had not thought of marriage, but now the helplessness of the girl appealed to him. He proposed and was accepted. He never had cause to regret his action, for beautiful Grace Garland made a wife of whom any man might be proud.

His marriage also made a great change in Mr. Chittenden. The house was enlarged and beautified. He greatly prospered, and in time became one of the prominent men in his section of the country. He was called Judge, and sent to the Legislature, and was even pressed to run for Congress. Against this he resolutely set his face. The ghost of the past arose and frightened him. As a congressman his past might be traced.

A couple of years after his marriage a daughter was born and was named Grace, after her mother.

Mr. Chittenden continued to prosper, and in time bought a few slaves. This put him on a higher plane, for to be a slave-holder was to belong to the aristocracy, and it was a matter of pride among the Ozarks that Mr. Chittenden owned slaves.

Little Grace grew up a true child of the mountains, as wild and free as the birds. When she was about ten years of age her mother died. If it had not been for his daughter, Mr. Chittenden would have lost all interest in life. Now everything centered in her, and she became a part of his very life.

The death of his wife left him without a competent housekeeper, so one day he informed Grace he was going to St. Louis to see if he could not buy a colored woman recommended as a good housekeeper, and that if she liked she might go with him.

The girl was overjoyed, for she had never been away from her lovely valley home. The hills to her had been the boundary of the world, and often as she gazed at them she would wonder and wonder what was beyond. The birds were her friends, and they seemed to sing of things she did not know. They had wings and could fly and explore that wonderful beyond. She often wished she too had wings, so she might fly with the birds—then she would know too.

Her mother early had taught her to read, and Mr. Chittenden had gathered quite a library. Grace read every book in it with avidity, but they told her of a world she could not understand.

But now she was to go beyond the barrier; she was to see the world, and she could hardly wait for the time to start.

At last the day came and the journey was begun, first on horseback and then by a lumbering stage coach.

In due time they reached the city, and what she saw filled her with wonder and surprise. But when she woke in the morning and heard no singing of birds, but instead the din and roar of the street; and when she looked out and saw no lovely valley, no stately hills, no La Belle, its waters sparkling in the sun, but instead row upon row of great buildings, she sighed—she hardly knew why.

The next day when her father showed her around the city she said, "It's all very wonderful, papa, but it isn't like home. The houses are not as beautiful as the hills, and even the great river does not sing as sweetly, and its waters are not clear and sparkling like La Belle."

One day Mr. Chittenden told Grace there was to be an auction of slaves, and he would go and try to get one for a housekeeper. The little girl was eager to go with him, but he would not allow it. She wondered why and rebelled, but her father was obdurate and left her crying.

Grace's slightest wish was generally law to her father, and to be refused and left alone was to her a surprise. She did not realize that her father did not wish her to see the distressing scenes which often took place at an auction of slaves.

In due time Mr. Chittenden returned, accompanied by a comely mulatto woman about forty years of age. The woman's eyes were red with weeping, and now and then her bosom would heave with a great sob which she would in vain try to hold back.

"This is Tilly, Grace," said her father. "She is said to be a good housekeeper and a famous cook."

"Why do you cry?" asked Grace. "Papa is a good man; he will use you well."

"It's not that," sobbed the woman: "it's mah honey chile, mah little Effie. I'll neber see her moah." And she broke down and sobbed piteously.

Grace turned with a distressed countenance. "Did Tilly have a little girl?" she asked.

"Y-e-s," answered Mr. Chittenden, rather reluctantly.

"Why didn't you buy her too?" she asked indignantly. "What if someone should take me from you?"

Mr. Chittenden winced. "That is different, child," he answered. "As for Tilly's child, a trader from New Orleans bought her, paying an enormous price. She was nearly white, and gave promise of becoming quite a beauty. Rich people give large prices for such for maids. I could not afford to buy her. As it was, I had to pay a big price for Tilly."

Grace said no more, but from that time new thoughts entered her mind, and when alone with Tilly she tried to comfort her.

Tilly proved as good a housekeeper and cook as Mr. Chittenden could have desired, and in time seemed to have forgotten her child. But Grace knew better, for when alone with her Tilly never tired of telling her about her "honey chile," and Grace was learning what it meant to be a slave, and all unconsciously to herself she was drinking in a love of freedom.

As for Tilly, she came to worship the very ground that Grace walked on. Willingly she would have shed every drop of blood in her veins for her.

Years went by and other settlers came into the Ozarks, but they were a rough, uneducated class, and Mr. Chittenden had little in common with them. In time a Mr. Thomas Osborne settled about four miles from him. He was a northern man, well educated, and had come to the Ozarks for his health, being threatened with consumption. He had a daughter, Helen, about the age of Grace, and the two became inseparable friends.

When Grace was about fifteen years of age it was evident that she would be a very beautiful woman. She was by no means an ignorant girl, for her father had employed a private teacher for her, and she was far better acquainted with the elementary branches and with books than most girls who attend fashionable boarding schools.

But she was still a child of nature, the birds her best companions. The wind whispering through the forest told her wonderful stories. She could ride and shoot equal to any boy who roamed the Ozarks, and was the companion of her father as he looked after his flocks and herds.

The father saw she was fast budding into womanhood, and sighed, for he felt she should know something beyond the rough life of the mountains, and, although parting from her was like tearing out his own heart, he resolved to send her to a boarding school in St. Louis. His daughter must be a lady; he had not forgotten his early life.

Grace heard his decision. She had not forgotten her visit to that wonderful city five years before, and, now that she was older, thought she would like to see and know more of it.

"But how can I leave you, papa?" she exclaimed, throwing her arms around his neck and pressing kiss after kiss upon his brow.

Mr. Chittenden clasped her to his breast. "It will not be for long, child," he said huskily, "and I would have my little girl a lady."

"Am I not a lady, now?" she asked, pouting.

"Yes, yes, Grace; but I would have you know something of the ways of society. I do not want you to be always a mountain girl. You are worthy to adorn the grandest palace in the city."

"I don't want to adorn a palace. I love the valley of La Belle," she replied. "I want to live and die here."

"You may think differently some day, child. It is only for your good I would have you go, for, Grace, you do not know how hard it is for me to part from you."

Again the girl threw her arms around him. "Don't make me go, papa," she sobbed. "I thought I wanted to go, but I don't now. I don't want to be a fine lady. I want to stay with you."

"No, Grace; it is for the best." And so it was fully decided.

The time came for her to go. The parting with Helen Osborne was a tearful one, but Tilly was inconsolable. "All de sunshine will be gone frum de house," she moaned. "When Missy Grace goes, Tilly want to die."

"Oh, no, Tilly; you want to be here to welcome me when I come back," said Grace.

Grace was taken to St. Louis and placed in one of the most fashionable schools in the city. Lola Laselle and Dorothy Hamilton were members of the same school, but as they were day pupils, Grace did not become very well acquainted with them.

Grace's gentle, unaffected ways soon made her a favorite, but there were a few of the pupils who looked down on the mountain girl as beneath them. But gentle as Grace was, there was the blood of a fiery and proud race in her veins, and she soon taught those girls she could not be snubbed with impunity. She was an apt pupil and soon became the most popular girl in the school, and the haughty ones were proud to be classed as her friends.

The rules and restrictions of the school were irksome to her, and she became the leader of a bevy of girls who delighted in having a good time, and many were the little luncheons they enjoyed together after the teachers thought all good girls were in bed.

One day Grace heard the girls discussing a book which at that time was creating a sensation.

"It's dreadful," said one of the girls. "Every copy printed ought to be destroyed, and the woman who wrote it burned at the stake."

"Have you read it?" asked one of the girls.

The first girl raised her eyebrows in surprise. "Read it!" she exclaimed. "I would as soon touch a viper as that book."

"How do you know it is bad, then?" persisted the second girl.

"Because I have heard papa say so. It's all about slavery, and makes out that the people that own slaves are the wickedest people in the world. Papa says the book will cause a war yet."

"My papa says," spoke up another, "that the South is going to secede, and when it does he says there may be war."

"Pshaw! the Yankees will not fight," exclaimed a girl from Mississippi. "Brother Ned says they are a cowardly lot, and that one Southern gentleman can whip ten of them."

The conversation now took a general turn over what would happen if war came, and it was the opinion of most of the girls that it would be just grand.

Grace listened eagerly to the conversation, but took no part. So far she had given little attention to the strife which was agitating the country. Even the conflict which had raged along the borders of Missouri and Kansas had only come as a faint echo among the Ozarks. But now she asked, "What is the name of the book you girls are talking about?"

"Uncle Tom's Cabin. It's a horrid book," replied one of the girls.

Grace said no more, but she determined to have that book; she wanted to see what made it so terrible. The first time she had leave to go downtown she made an excuse to go into a book store and purchase a copy. She concealed it in her clothes and then made a few other purchases.

"Why, Grace, what made you so long?" asked the monitor in charge of the girls when she returned.

"Couldn't get waited on before," answered Grace demurely.

That evening Grace swore her room-mate to eternal secrecy, and then showed her the book.

The girl was horrified. "What made you buy it?" she wailed. "Why, if I should take that book home I would be arrested and sent to prison."

"I am determined to see what kind of a book it is," answered Grace, doggedly. "When I see, I can burn it up if I don't like it."

"I wouldn't touch it for the whole world," exclaimed her room-mate. "Burn it up. Burn it up now, Grace. What if the girls found it out! We would be disgraced, ostracized, perhaps expelled!"

"If you don't tell, I will take care that no one else sees it," said Grace.

The next day Grace feigned a headache, and remained in her room to read the book. That evening her room-mate asked about it.

"You will never see it," replied Grace. "I looked into it and concluded you were right; it would never do for that book to be found in our room. I have destroyed it."

"Grace Chittenden," cried the girl, "I believe you pretended to have a headache so you could stay in our room and read that book! I have a mind to report you. What kind of a book was it? Tell me."

"Do you want me to corrupt you too, Mabel?" laughed Grace. "No; the book is destroyed, and that ends it. It is not the kind of a book I thought it was—not so horrid; but it makes one think. I am almost sorry I read it."

That night Grace lay awake a long time thinking of Uncle Tom and Little Eva, and more than once she sighed, "Tilly is right. Slavery is wicked—wicked!"

Grace had been in school two years when the war opened. Even the seclusion of a girl's boarding school could not help being penetrated by the fierce excitement which swept through the whole country. The streets were filled with marching troops. Many of the girls had brothers in Frost's militia. Then Camp Jackson was taken.

Grace heard the distant firing, saw the surging mob in the streets, but in the midst of the excitement her father came. He had hurried to the city to take her home—to take her to the heart of the Ozarks, where he hoped the red waves of war would never come.

Marion Chittenden was by nature fierce and combative, but the horror from which he had fled had so changed him that it was only when some great excitement moved him that his passions were aroused. He was a strong partisan of the South and believed the North wholly wrong. It was only his age and an injury that forbade protracted riding on horseback that kept him from offering his services to the State.

Mr. Chittenden's fierce denunciation of the North alarmed Grace. What would he say if he knew

she was for the Union? She resolved to keep still and say nothing. She noticed a large number of rough men calling on her father, and a great number of secret consultations were held.

The first great shock came to Grace when one day her father said, "Grace, I wish you would cease visiting Helen Osborne, and by all means do not invite her here. I want no intercourse between the two families."

Grace opened her eyes in astonishment. "Why, father, what is the matter?" she asked.

"Osborne is a sneaking Yankee, an abolitionist, and the old fool can't keep his mouth shut."

"What difference should that make as far as Helen and I are concerned?" asked Grace, her eyes flashing.

Surprised at the feeling his daughter showed, Mr. Chittenden said more gently: "Grace, you do not understand, you do not realize the feeling throughout the country. To be friendly with the Osbornes would bring suspicion on me. Even your visits would be misconstrued. Do as I ask you, Grace, for my sake."

She promised, though very reluctantly. More than once she resolved to tell her father her true feelings, but shrank from the ordeal.

After that Grace did not leave the valley. Rough, uncouth men came to visit her father more frequently than ever, and she heard enough to know that the waves of war had rolled clear down to Springfield and that the whole State was becoming a vast armed camp.

One day her father seemed much perturbed, and at last rode away in company with several men. Grace noticed they were all armed. Feeling alarmed as well as lonely, she resolved to take a ride. Ordering her favorite horse saddled, she soon was galloping down the valley towards the Osbornes. Why she took that direction she hardly knew. She rode as near to the Osbornes as she thought prudent, and was about to turn back, when she saw a great cloud of smoke arising.

"It must be the Osborne house," she exclaimed, and urged her horse forward. When she came to where she could see she reined in her horse and gazed at the scene in horror. Not only was Mr. Osborne's house in flames, but his barn and outbuildings, as well as stacks of grain.

But it was not so much the fire as what else she saw that made her face pale and her breath to come in gasps. A little apart from the fire stood a group of men, and in their midst Mr. Osborne, with a rope around his neck. His wife and daughter were clinging to him, and even from where Grace was their shrieks and cries for mercy reached her ears. She took one look, then struck her horse a sharp blow and, like a whirlwind, came upon the scene. Astonished, the men stood like statues.

"You pretend to be men, I suppose," she cried, "and call this war. Cowards! Poltroons! Murderers!"



**"You pretend to be men and call this war!"**

Just then she caught sight of her father in the group. "You too!" she gasped, and fell fainting from her horse.

When she came to she was in her father's arms, the men had gone, and bending over her was Helen Osborne, bathing her face. She opened her eyes and then, shuddering, closed them again. She had looked into the face of a man stricken as unto death.

"Grace, Grace," he moaned, "another such look as that will kill me. You do not understand. I was trying to save life, not take it."

A shiver went through her body, but she did not open her eyes nor answer.

"Grace, hear me. I am not what you think. O God!"

"What did you say, father?" she whispered.

"That I was trying to save Mr. Osborne, not hang him."

Once more her eyes opened, but now they looked with love into her father's face. "Thank God!" she murmured, and her arms went around his neck. The strong man wept as he clasped her to his breast and kissed her again and again.

"Take me home," she whispered weakly. "I feel, oh, so faint!"

On the invitation of Mr. Chittenden the Osbornes accompanied him. The next day he sent them out of the country.

When Grace was strong enough to hear, her father told her all. Mr. Osborne's pronounced Northern principles had made him very obnoxious to those who sympathized with the South. "It was for this reason, Grace," he said, "I forbade your visiting Helen. Even a friendly intercourse between you two would have brought suspicion on me. You cannot understand the terrible feeling towards all Yankees and those who sympathize with them. Mr. Osborne was repeatedly warned to leave the country, but he paid no attention to the warnings. Instead, he became active in giving information to the Federal authorities. Some time ago it became known that he had sent to the Federal commander at Rolla the name of every active Southern sympathizer in the country. My name was on the list as one of the leaders.

"This was too much for the boys, and they decided on summary punishment, but, knowing that I was opposed to extreme means, they tried to keep what they were to do from me. I found it out and did all in my power to save him, but a vote was taken, and it was decided he should be burned out and then hanged. It was only your timely arrival that saved him. He is well out of the country now, for which I am thankful."

Grace listened to his account in silence, then said: "I'm so glad, father, you tried to save him. I thought—oh, I can't tell what I thought, it was so dreadful."

She then seemed struggling with herself, as if she wanted to say something and dared not.

"What is it, child?" asked Mr. Chittenden gently.

Looking at him with yearning eyes, she whispered, "Do you love me?"

"What a question, Grace! Better than my life! You should know that!"

"And will you let anything come between? Will you always love me, even if I am not what you think?"

"Grace, what do you mean?" he cried, brokenly. A terrible suspicion came to him that her mind was wandering, that the shock she had received had unbalanced her reason.

"Father, I must tell you. I cannot think as you do. This war is terrible, and I believe the South is all in the wrong."

Mr. Chittenden could only gasp his astonishment, then he commenced laughing. "Is that all, Grace? I thought—well, it hardly matters what I thought. It was unworthy of me. But what makes you think the South is all wrong?"

"I do not know as I can make you understand, but, father—I hate slavery! I think I was born with a love for freedom. I have drunk it in from my childhood. This valley, the grand old hills around it, all speak of freedom. La Belle murmurs it as her waters dance and sparkle on their way to the sea. The wind in the trees sings of freedom, the birds warble it."

"Grace, you are poetic; it is only these fancies that make you think as you do."

"No, father. You know I love history, and you have some good histories in your library. I have learned how slavery came into this country, how it grew; and I also know something about what is called State Rights. I believe the South claims any State has a perfect right to withdraw from the Union at pleasure."

"Yes, the doctrine is true. We are no rebels."

"I can't believe it. To trample on the flag of our common country is rebellion. Father, I love the



starry flag. I carry it next my heart." To her father's surprise, she put her hand in her bosom and drew forth a tiny flag. "I made it, father, at school. While the other girls were making Confederate flags, I made this one."

Mr. Chittenden could only say, "Thank God, you are not a boy."

"Father, you do not hate me?"

"No, child; I look at what you have said as only the foolish fancies of a girl. You will laugh at them yourself when you are older. But, Grace, let me ask you a question. According to your ideas I am a rebel. Does that make you love me less?"

For answer she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. "No, father, for you are doing what you think right. If you were in the army, riding at the head of your regiment, I would be proud of you—pray for you."

"Would to God that I could," cried Mr. Chittenden, "and, old as I am, I would if it were not for this infernal rupture. But, Grace, I can never forget that look you gave me when you thought I was one of the gang about to hang Osborne. If I had been, would you still love me?" His voice trembled as he asked the question.

The girl shivered and was silent for a moment, then said: "When—when I thought you were, it was as if a dagger had pierced my heart. I believe I would have died then and there if I had not learned differently. It would have been my love for you that would have killed me. To think my father was a mur——"

She did not finish the sentence. A look of anguish, of terror, came into the father's face. He trembled like a leaf—what if his daughter knew his past!

"What is it, father?" cried Grace in alarm.

With a tremendous effort Mr. Chittenden recovered his composure. "Nothing now, Grace, but your words were so terrible. Don't say them again, Grace. I—I would die if I lost my daughter's love."

"You never will, father. You are too good, too noble," and she drew his head down and kissed him again and again.

Oh! the past! the past! How it stung that father as he felt his daughter's pure kisses on his brow!

"Father, you are not angry with me, are you?" asked Grace, wondering at his silence.

"No, darling; only, for my sake, keep your belief to yourself."

"For your sake I will be just as little a Yankee as possible," answered Grace, smiling.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### A WOUNDED CONFEDERATE

A few days after the battle of Pea Ridge there came riding into the valley of La Belle a wounded Confederate soldier. He was mounted on a raw-boned, emaciated horse that staggered as it walked. The rider seemed as weak as the horse, for he swayed in the saddle as he rode, and the bridle reins hung limp in his hands. The soldier's left arm was supported by a dirty sling, and the front of his uniform, if uniform it could be called, showed it had been soaked in blood.

The deep-set eyes of the soldier glowed with an unnatural fire, and he was muttering to himself, as if in delirium.

Of his own accord, the horse turned up to the door of Mr. Chittenden's house, and that gentleman came out just in time to catch the rider as he reeled from the saddle.

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### **To catch the rider as he reeled from the saddle.**

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"He is about done for," he exclaimed as he ordered him carried in. "Tilly," he called, "here is a patient for you."

The colored woman came running, and with her Grace, who looked at the wan features of the soldier with piteous eyes. "Why, father, he's nothing but a boy," she exclaimed. "Where did he come from?"

"A sorry-looking horse brought him here, is all I know," replied her father.

A hasty examination showed a ball had gone through the muscles of his left arm about half-way between the elbow and shoulder and then torn a great jagged wound in the breast.

Tilly was a born nurse. The first thing she did was to turn to Grace and say, "Now, Missy Grace, yo' jes go 'way an' leave this boy to me. Dis is no place for a youn' lady."

The next time Grace saw the boy he was lying in a clean bed, his wounds neatly dressed. His bloody uniform had disappeared and instead he had on a soft white night-shirt. As Grace looked at him, so thin and pale, her eyes filled with tears, and she murmured, "Poor boy! Poor boy! I wonder if he has a mother." Then she turned to her father and asked, "Will he get well?"

"I'm afraid not," answered Mr. Chittenden. "He is not only badly wounded, but has a raging fever. I have sent for Doctor Hart. He will do all he can for him."

Doctor Hart lived miles away, and it was not until the next day he arrived. After examining the boy he said, "The wounds are bad, very bad. Without the fever, I would say he had a chance, but now I can hold out little hope. Who is he?"

"I know no more than you," replied Mr. Chittenden, and related how the boy came.

"Strange, very strange!" said the Doctor. "These wounds have the appearance of having been inflicted several days ago, and yet I have heard of no fighting near by. Must have been shot in a brawl."

"There is the battle of Pea Ridge; you know we have just heard of it."

"Mercy, man! what are you talking about! It must be between one and two hundred miles to where that battle was fought. I do not see how this boy could have ridden ten miles with the wounds he has. He must be a spunky chap, and I will do the best I can for him; but I reckon, Chittenden, you will have a funeral on your hands in a day or two."

But the young soldier did not die, although it was Tilly's careful nursing rather than the skill of the doctor that saved him.

For two days he tossed in delirium, and then the fever left him and he began to mend. Tilly was assiduous in her attentions, and until he was out of danger could hardly be persuaded to leave the bedside, even for rest.

When the wounded soldier became well enough to talk he told his story to Mr. Chittenden. He

said his name was Mark Grafton, that his parents were dead, and that he had no living relatives who cared for him. "I am all alone in the world," he said, "and, Mr. Chittenden, if you had let me die there would have been no one to weep."

"Are you as friendless as that?" asked Mr. Chittenden.

"As friendless as that! I am nothing but a poor private soldier," answered Mark.

He then went on and told how he had been with Price from the beginning, how he had fought at Wilson Creek and Lexington and numerous other engagements.

"But at Pea Ridge——" Mark stopped and sighed.

"Pea Ridge!" cried Mr. Chittenden. "Was it at Pea Ridge you received your wounds?"

Mark nodded.

"And you rode all the distance from there here, wounded as you were? It seems impossible."

"I reckon I must," said Mark; "but I remember little about it. It was this way: We whipped them the first day; that is, Price's army did. Before the battle, McCullough's men—and he had a larger army than Price—made fun of our appearance and said they would show us how to fight, but they ran like sheep, while we drove the Yankees before us. We thought the victory ours. But with McCullough out of the way, the next morning the whole Yankee army attacked us, and we had to retreat. The retreat became a rout. I was wounded and left on the field for dead. When I came to it was night and the stars were shining. I staggered to my feet and was fortunate enough to catch a stray horse and, by taking a defile through the hills, was able to get away. I stopped at a house and had my wounds roughly dressed. It was reported that the Yankee cavalry were scouring the country, picking up the fugitives, and, although I was so weak from my wounds I could hardly stand, I determined to push on. Then my head began to feel strange: I saw all sorts of things. From that time until I came to and found myself here, I have no remembrance, how I got here, or how long it was after the battle."

"The battle had been fought about two weeks when you put in an appearance," said Mr. Chittenden.

"I must have stopped, and got some rest during that time," said Mark. "But where—it's all a blank. I feel I owe my life to you, Mr. Chittenden. Not many would be as kind to a poor friendless soldier as you have been to me. I feel——"

"No thanks, my boy; you must stay with us until you get entirely well."

"I reckon I will have to," replied Mark, with a smile. "I don't feel much like traveling."

There seemed to be something troubling Mark, and at last he asked Mr. Chittenden what had become of the clothes he wore when he came.

"Burnt up, Mark."

Mark gave a convulsive start and looked as if he were going to faint.

"There, don't worry; I'll see you have much better ones; those you wore were in awful condition," replied Mr. Chittenden.

"But—but what became of what was in the pockets?" Mark asked the question with a visible effort to appear calm.

"All safe, nothing disturbed. I gave orders that nothing should be touched until we saw whether you lived or died."

Mark looked relieved, but he only said: "There is nothing to worry about; but I had a little money in my pockets, and it might have been taken from me while I was wandering, not myself."

"We will see," said Mr. Chittenden, and he got the articles which had been taken from Mark's clothing.

Mark hastily glanced them over and said, "It's all right. I am glad there is money enough here to pay you, in part, for your trouble."

"None of that, Mark. I will throw you out of the house if you ever say pay again. In fact, I would take it as an insult," said Mr. Chittenden.

Mark said no more, but, glancing over the articles, he abstracted two or three papers, and handed the rest back to Mr. Chittenden, asking him to keep them for him. No sooner was he gone than Mark called Tilly and handed her the papers he had kept, asking her if she would not burn them. "Don't let anyone see them, Tilly, and burn them right away."

"Dat what I will," said Tilly, taking them.

"And, Tilly, don't say anything about it to anyone."

"Honey boy kin trust Tilly," exclaimed the woman as she turned to hurry away, highly pleased that she had been trusted with a secret errand.

"I can now rest easy," murmured Mark, as he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

One day as Tilly was administering to his wants Mark said, "Tilly, I don't know, but it seems as if I have seen you somewhere before, but for the life of me I can't remember where."

"Dat is jes what I said 'bout yo', Marse Mark," cried Tilly, her face brightening. "I said shorely I hev seen dat boy somewhar. It jes 'peared to me that Tilly had held yo' in her arms some time, an' Tilly tuk yo' to her ole heart right away, an' she grab yo' when de ole deth angel had hole of yo', and she sed, 'Go 'way, ole deth angel, dis is mah boy,' an' she tuk yo' right out of de clutches of dat ole deth angel, she did, an' now yo' air mah boy."

Mark smiled as he said, "Yes, Tilly, I believe you did cheat the death angel, and if anyone has a claim on me, you have. I shall always remember you."

"An' Missy Grace, she helped too," cried Tilly. "Yo' mustn't forgit Missy Grace."

"I shall never forget her," replied Mark, and there was more meaning in his words than Tilly thought.

That night Mark lay thinking over what Tilly had said about holding him in her arms, and suddenly he remembered. "She is right," he almost sobbed. "She has held me in her arms, but she must never know."

At last the day came when Mark could sit in a chair on the porch and look out over the beautiful valley and stately hills. The valley was arrayed in all the freshness and loveliness of spring; La Belle was murmuring her sweetest music.

"What a lovely valley you have here," he said to Mr. Chittenden. "One should be perfectly happy here—so peaceful, so beautiful, so far removed from the unrest and turmoil of the world."

"You talk like a philosopher, young man," replied Mr. Chittenden, laughing. "Not many of the world would like it; the mass of mankind prefer the rush and roar of the cities. There is little room for ambition here. The world would never have grown to what it is if all preferred to live as I do. Yet I would live nowhere else. Yes, it is very quiet here, or was before the war."

"Has the war disturbed you much?" asked Mark.

"Yes, a great deal. As yet there has been no fighting nearer than Frederickstown, but the hills are full of small guerrilla bands, I would not be surprised to have a Federal cavalry force visit us any day. I try to impress on the boys that it would be better if they were in the army fighting, but few of them care to become regular soldiers."

Mark said no more, but sat apparently buried in deep thought.

It was not to be expected that Mark had remained at Mr. Chittenden's all of this time without him and Grace becoming fast friends. Mark was so different from what she had expected when he represented himself as a poor, homeless private soldier, that it puzzled her. "There is a mystery about him," she said to herself, "and I am going to find out what it is. Whatever he is now, he was raised a gentleman."

As for Mark, he almost regretted he was getting well. The girl had come to fill a large share of his thoughts. He had also learned some things that surprised him. He had heard Grace and Tilly talk when he was lying, as they thought, asleep, and he knew that Grace's heart was with the North, and not the South, and that she hated slavery.

One day Tilly told Grace a story that caused every nerve in his body to tingle, and he scarcely could keep from crying out.

Mark was very curious to know whether or not Mr. Chittenden was cognizant of his daughter's heresy, and soon found that he was, but that he looked upon it as a mere girlish whim.

As Mark grew stronger he and Mr. Chittenden grew very intimate, and he never tired to hear Mark tell of how he had fought with Price at Wilson Creek, at Lexington, and at Pea Ridge.

In turn he confided to Mark that his house was what might be called a station between Missouri and Arkansas. The route through the valley of La Belle was little known to Federals, and practically unguarded. It touched no towns in their possession, and thus left an almost uninterrupted gateway between the two States.

Mark soon noticed that a good many Confederate officers were making their way north, and he learned that a gigantic conspiracy was on foot, but, being only a private soldier, he was not taken into their confidence.

One day there came to the house on his way north the same Colonel Clay spoken of in our first chapter. He noticed and asked about Mark, and, when told, exclaimed, "Remarkable! I would like to speak to him."

He made Mark tell him the whole story. Not only this, but by questioning he learned that Mark had not only a keen knowledge of military affairs but was wonderfully well informed as to the army.

"It's a shame you were kept in the ranks. You should be an officer," cried Clay.

"All can not be officers, and I was content to serve my country in the most humble capacity,"

modestly replied Mark. "Alas! I am afraid I can serve her no more." And he touched his wounded arm.

"I don't know about that," said Colonel Clay. "You may be able to serve your country even in a greater capacity than you yet have. I have some important documents which I would like to get into St. Louis to certain parties. I will not deny that if you were caught with them on your person it would be certain death; but I believe you are both brave and shrewd."

"The boy is not able," spoke up Mr. Chittenden. "He has not been out of bed more than a week. His wounds are not healed yet."

"So much the better," said Clay. "If he can ride, he can get through where a well man can not."

"I will go. A man can die but once, and it is for my country." As Mark said this his eyes fairly seemed to shine.

"Bravely spoken, my lad," cried Clay. "Would we had more like you!"

So it was arranged that Mark was to make the dangerous journey.

"Why do you do this, Mark?" asked Grace when he went to bid her good-bye.

"It is for my country," answered Mark.

"You mean it is to help destroy your country. I despise the cause for which you fight."

"Yes, I know; your father told me."

"You knew, and never let on?"

"Why should I?"

"Because father says I am a traitor to the South."

"Grace, if I never come back, remember that there is one who never will despise you, believe what you will."

"Take it easy," said Clay to Mark as he started to ride away. "Don't overtax your strength. Two or three days will not matter much."

Colonel Clay had liberally supplied Mark with money for the journey; in fact, the Colonel seemed to have plenty of money.

"Clay, I don't like it. You should never have sent him," said Mr. Chittenden. "I am afraid he never will live to see St. Louis, and I have grown fond of the boy. We raised him, as it were, from the dead."

"Never fear," replied the Colonel. "The same grit that brought him here will take him to St. Louis. If he dies after he gets there—well, it won't matter much. His mission will be done, and it may mean the redemption of the State. What is one life to that?"

Grace overheard the heartless remark, and a fierce anger seized her. It was well the Colonel left the next day, for she resolutely refused to serve him or sit at the same table with him.

The days passed. Two weeks passed, and then three, and Mark had not returned. Grace grew restless, her father anxious, and Tilly kept asking, "Whar is mah boy?"

But one day Mark appeared. He was riding slowly, so slowly, and his face was flushed. It was seen the fever had him again.

"Help me off." His voice was almost a whisper.

He was helped off, and almost carried into the house, and it was some weeks before he was able to leave it. "I do not regret the journey," he said to Mr. Chittenden. "I was entirely successful in my mission, and I rejoice that I was able to do something for my country, wounded as I am."

During his convalescence this time, Grace was with him a good deal. She sang and read to him, and Mark thought he never had heard a voice so sweet. Even the hand of Tilly was not so gentle and soothing on his fevered brow as was the hand of Grace.

By the first of August he had nearly recovered, but with August came Colonel Clay, returning to the South. He was in a towering rage, for all his planning had come to naught. The defeat of Porter at Moore's Mill, and then his complete overthrow at Kirksville, the dispersion of Poindexter's army, and his capture, ended all his hopes of capturing Missouri by a partisan uprising.

But one hope remained to him—that the movement in Southwest Missouri might be successful and Independence and Lexington captured. If so, the blow must be struck, and struck quickly. It had been ordered, but Colonel Clay was afraid it would not be struck quickly enough. Therefore when he saw Mark his face brightened.

"Ah, my boy, I learned weeks ago that your mission was entirely successful. You are a faithful courier, and I have another job for you."

"The one he had nearly proved the death of him," spoke up Mr. Chittenden. "The hardships of the

trip were too much for him, and he lay for days with a return of the fever."

"He must go; I can trust no one else," cried Clay. "He is a soldier. I command him."

"I need no commands. I will go," said Mark proudly, drawing himself up.

"That's the talk. I knew I could depend on you," replied Clay.

When Grace learned Mark was to go again, she solemnly assured him that if he did and got the fever, he would have to look for someone else to nurse him, but her voice trembled and tears gathered in her eyes as she bade him good-bye.

As for Mark, he only said as he rode away, "God bless you, if I never see you again."

After Mark had gone Colonel Clay apologized to Mr. Chittenden for sending him, saying there were so few he could trust with so delicate a mission. Then with an oath he exclaimed, "Chittenden, there is a traitor somewhere. Schofield got hold of our entire plans in regard to this uprising. If I only knew who it was." He brought his fist down with a resounding blow on the table beside which they were sitting.

"Have you any suspicion?" asked Mr. Chittenden.

"No, it is some one high up, but I'll get him yet."

The next day Colonel Clay continued on his way to the south. In a few days he had the satisfaction of hearing that Independence was taken and Foster defeated. But a little later came the discouraging news that the Confederate forces in Southwest Missouri were again in full retreat for Arkansas.

This time Mark was not gone as long as before but he returned in a weak and exhausted condition.

When Colonel Clay went away he left orders for Mark to join him in Arkansas on his return.

"I shall do no such thing. He has no right to order me," exclaimed Mark. "What I have done I have done of my own volition."

"Good for you, Mark," said Mr. Chittenden. "Stay right here and get entirely well. Then you can help me, as I have some important orders to fill for supplies for General Hindman."

"Thank you. You are very kind," replied Mark. "So kind that I am afraid I shall trespass on your hospitality longer than is well." As he said it, his eyes wandered over to where Grace was sitting.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### TRAILING RED JERRY

Lawrence sat reading a letter. It was from Harry and told of his adventures since their parting. It closed as follows: "Captain, I want to come to you. Bruno and I are becoming too well known in this section. Then it has been very quiet here since Porter and most of his men fled south. I understand General McNeil and most of his force have been ordered to Southeastern Missouri, so there is little here for me to do. Try and get me transferred if you can. I have a mate now, a boy about my age, by the name of Jack Harwood. He is a good one, and is crazy to come with me. See if you can't get him transferred too."

Dan came in just as Lawrence finished reading the letter. "What do you think of that, Dan?" asked Lawrence, handing it to him.

Dan read it. "Don't see what you can do for him when you can't keep me," said Dan, lugubriously. He had been in the dumps ever since he thought that he and Lawrence might have to part.

"Cheer up, Dan," said Lawrence. "I have good news for you. General Schofield finds so much requiring his attention that he will not be able to take the field in person for some time yet. He has requested me to take a force of fifty men and scout down through the Ozarks and then make my way to General Blount in Northwest Arkansas. Of course, you will go with me."

Dan was so excited that he took three chews of tobacco, one right after the other.

"You can send for Harry now, can't you?" asked Dan.

"Yes, and to please him I will also ask for a transfer for that mate of his. He must be a good one to have Harry like him so well."

Lawrence had no trouble in getting Harry Semans and Jack Harwood, scouts, transferred to his command.

When the transfer came Harry was overjoyed, and lost no time in reporting at Rolla, where Lawrence was organizing his company.

"Hello, you here already?" cried Lawrence, as Harry made his appearance. "Mighty glad to see

you and Bruno, too. How are you, old fellow?" and Lawrence patted the dog's head and heartily shook the paw extended to him.

"Here is Jack, Captain, you mustn't forget him," said Harry introducing his companion.

"Ah! Jack, glad to meet you," said Lawrence so heartily and cheerily that Jack's heart was at once won. "Anyone that Harry recommends needs nothing more. You are more than welcome."

"I can never hope to equal Harry," replied Jack, modestly, "but where he leads I can follow."

"The trouble is he wants to go ahead where there is danger," laughed Harry.

"I reckon I will have to put leading strings on both of you," replied Lawrence, with a smile.

Just as Lawrence was ready to start for the Ozarks he received a message from General Schofield, saying that Red Jerry and his band were making a great deal of trouble along the Osage; that he had lately surprised and nearly annihilated a force of seventy-five men under a Captain Dunlay, and that the victory had encouraged him to commit further excesses.

"Can't you go and teach him a lesson he won't forget, before you start for the Ozarks?" asked the General.

"Here, what do you think of this, Dan?" asked Lawrence, handing the message to his lieutenant.

"Let's go by all means," replied Dan, his face brightening. "I am just aching to get a chance at that fellow."

"The same here," exclaimed Lawrence.

Hearing that Captain Dunlay, who had been in command of the force Red Jerry had routed, was in Rolla, Lawrence hunted him up to learn all he could of his whereabouts, and the supposed number of his band.

When Dunlay heard Lawrence was to go after Red Jerry with fifty men he was astonished. "Captain," he exclaimed, "It's suicidal! Your force will simply be exterminated. Red Jerry has at least two hundred men and they fight like devils."

"Never mind the number of his men, or how they fight," said Lawrence. "What I want to know is where I will be most likely to find him."

"I can tell you where I found him," snapped Dunlay, nettled at what Lawrence had said, "and I wish you joy when you meet him."

"No offence, Captain," replied Lawrence. "Just tell me what you know about his hiding places."

The Captain told all he knew, and when Lawrence thanked him and went away, Dunlay turned to a brother officer standing by and remarked, "That young popinjay will be wiser before many days."

The next morning Lawrence was on his way bright and early. It was not until the afternoon of the second day that he began to hear anything of Red Jerry. He then learned that he had attacked and was chasing a small scouting party towards Versailles.

"Dan, we are in luck," said Lawrence. "Jerry will not be expecting a force from this way, and we may meet him on the way back."

The meeting took place quicker than Lawrence expected. Towards evening there came from the front the sound of several shots, and in a few minutes Harry Semans, who was in command of the advance guard, came galloping up.

"Guerrillas ahead, Captain," he reported.

"How many?"

"I only saw four, but I reckon there are more back. Bruno had hardly given a warning of danger ahead when these four came around a bend in the road at full gallop. They seemed surprised at seeing us, and after firing one volley wheeled their horses and went tearing back. The boys were eager to pursue, but I held them back, fearing an ambushade."

"You did right, Harry. We have a wary foe to contend with, up to all sorts of tricks. We can't be too careful."

Leaving the troop in charge of Dan, Lawrence rode forward with Harry to where the advance had halted.

"Seen anyone since I left?" asked Harry.

"No, but that dog of yours acts mighty queer."

"Plenty of rebs around then? Hello! There's a couple."

Two horsemen had appeared around the bend. When they noticed they had been discovered they halted and one of them, who was on a magnificent gray horse, raised a field glass to his eyes.

"Don't fire, boys, the distance is too great and I want to look at them," said Lawrence.

Lawrence took a look through his glasses and after a moment exclaimed, "Jerry Alcorn, as I live, on that gray horse. The one with him is a young fellow. Well, we have found the game we came after."

At the same time Jerry was saying to his companion, "I know that fellow, Agnes.<sup>[15]</sup> Curse the luck. It's Lawrence Middleton. It's run now instead of fight. Where in the world did he come from? and how did he get here?"

"Don't let's run until we have to," replied Billy. "This Middleton is the fellow who cut your command all to pieces last fall, is he not?"

"Yes, and the same one who run me out of St. Louis; but I hold no grudge against him for that, for if he had not I never would have met you. The ——"

This exclamation was caused by Lawrence and the advance guard charging down upon them. Lawrence had come to the conclusion that the guerrillas were surprised and totally unprepared for a fight. This was true. They were returning from their pursuit of the scouting party and were strung out a long distance along the road.

Wheeling their horses, Jerry and Billy rode madly back and after them thundered Lawrence and the guard. When they turned the bend in the road Lawrence saw a sight that made his heart thrill. On each side of the road for over a mile there were open fields. Scattered along the road for the whole distance was Jerry's band riding at leisure.

"Tell Dan to bring forward the whole troop at full gallop," shouted Lawrence.

Eager for the fray the troopers came. Jerry saw his danger and was wildly gesticulating for his men to turn back. They understood, and wheeling their horses, in a moment were in full retreat.

The troop came up and the order "Charge" was given. Soon the hindmost of the guerrillas and the foremost of the Federals began to exchange shots. A guerrilla's horse went down, but the rider scrambled to his feet and was over the fence and running like a deer when a carbine rang out and he fell, all crumpled up, and lay still.

Lawrence saw one of his men reel and then fall forward, clutching his horse's neck. Some of the guerrillas riding the fleetest horses formed a rear guard, and taking advantage of every rise of ground would hold the advance of the Federals back as long as possible.

The chase had continued some three miles, when the road became narrow and lined with bushes on each side. Jerry saw his opportunity; he knew the pursuit must be checked, or his whole band would be captured or dispersed. As it was, he had already lost six or seven men. He dashed to the head of the column and quickly gave orders. As the men passed him, three would spring from their horses and disappear in the brush, the fourth one riding on with the horses.

The road through the brush was a winding one, and Jerry was in hopes the Federals might not see what was being done and ride into the trap.

Mounted men would have but little chance in that narrow road against an enemy concealed in the brush. But Lawrence was not to be caught. He saw the opportunity afforded for just such a move; not only this, but he caught sight of the last of the guerrillas as they were disappearing in the brush.

"Halt!" he ordered.

His men drew rein, wondering why they were halted. When the column closed up, Lawrence ordered half of the men to dismount, form a skirmish line on each side of the road and to advance cautiously.

This was done, and soon the crack of the carbines and revolvers showed that the guerrillas had been aroused, and then the cheers of his men told Lawrence the enemy were retreating. Jerry had failed to draw the Federals into his trap, but he had saved his gang, for night was now near at hand and it would have been madness for Lawrence to continue the pursuit in the darkness.

Lawrence went into camp near a farmhouse, where he noticed there was plenty of provender for the horses.

The house was tenanted by a woman and three children. At the sight of the Yankees the children shrieked in terror and ran cowering behind their mother, who tried to preserve a brave front, but could not conceal her fears.

By questioning, Lawrence became convinced her husband was one of Jerry's band, but he quieted her fears by saying, "There is no reason for you to be alarmed. Your house will not be disturbed. I will see that no soldier enters it. What feed the horses need I will take. I also see some fat pigs. I shall let my men kill one. Some sweet potatoes may be dug and a few chickens killed, but nothing will be taken that we do not actually need, and nothing will be destroyed. But for all I know we may be attacked. My advice is to go into the house, bar the door and keep quiet."

Lawrence had had two men wounded in the *mêlée* and they were as tenderly cared for as possible.

The men were soon busy preparing supper, and chicken, fresh pork and sweet potatoes added to their rations, made, as they thought, a banquet fit for a king. All were in the highest spirits as



they discussed the incidents of the day.

"I tell you," said one, "that young Captain of ours is a good one. Not many would have discovered that ambuscade, and we would have ridden plumb into it."

In this they were all agreed, and when they saw the preparations that Lawrence made to guard against a surprise at night they became convinced, more than ever, that their Captain was all right.

As for the guerrillas, they felt when night came that they were safe; but Red Jerry was wild with rage. As soon as he became convinced that the pursuit was over he called a halt. If he wished, he could have been miles away by morning, and out of all danger, but he did not wish. He was burning for revenge. He detailed two of his best men to go back and find where the Yankees camped and then report as soon as possible. Runners were also sent out through the country to bring in all the men they could. By morning he believed he could rally at least a hundred men.

"They have not over fifty," said Jerry, as he discussed the matter with his officers. "If we can't whip them we had better go out of business. I will have revenge or die in the attempt. We will wait until Carter and Holmes report, then lay our plans."

Lawrence, like Jerry, was not satisfied with what had been done. After supper, when the men sat around discussing the results of the day, he said nothing, but sat buried in thought.

"Why so glum, Captain?" asked Dan. "Has anything gone wrong?"

"Yes," replied Lawrence. "We have just scorched the guerrillas instead of capturing or dispersing them, and by morning they will be miles away. I look upon our expedition as a failure."

"Pardon me, Captain," spoke up Harry, "but I believe you are mistaken when you say the guerrillas will be miles away in the morning. Instead, I look for an attack tonight or in the morning."

"What makes you think so?" asked Lawrence.

"In the first place, from what you tell me of Red Jerry, I do not think he is a man that will run away so easily. Then through that open country he had a good opportunity to ascertain our strength. He knows as well as you that we do not number over fifty. I took care to estimate his strength and he has about eighty. By morning he will have a hundred. Instead of running away, I am confident he is not over three miles from us, laying plans as to how he can get his revenge."

"Do you really think so, Harry?" asked Lawrence, rising.

"I not only think so, but I am going to know so."

"But how?"

"By going to see. By tracking them to their lair."

"How many men will you need to go with you?" asked Lawrence.

"I want Jack only. Bruno, of course, will be one of the party. More would be in the way. Come on, Jack."

"Aren't you going to take your horses?" cried Lawrence, seeing they were making preparation to start away on foot.

"Horses are no use on this scout. I hope to sneak up on them."

"Harry, I hate to see you go," said Lawrence, with feeling.

"Poof! I have had many a more dangerous job than this, but if we are not back by midnight, you may know something has happened. Come on, Jack."

The two boys and the dog were quickly swallowed up in the darkness. The men watched them as they went, and shook their heads. "Cap oughtn't to have let them go," said one.

"Don't worry," said Dan. "The boys can take care of themselves, and they have Bruno."

It was well they had Bruno, for after going a mile the dog turned up a road that crossed the one they were on. "We would have gone right on," said Harry. "It's funny how much more a dog knows about some things than a man."

After following the cross-road a space they saw the dim lights of a house ahead. They also became aware there were dogs on the place. Bruno began to bristle up.

"Quiet, old boy, no fuss," said Harry.

Bruno obeyed and walked meekly by his side.

But the dogs of the house barked so furiously that two men came out. Harry and Jack sought shelter in a clump of bushes by the roadside. It was starlight and objects could be distinguished some distance away. The dogs began leading the men directly to where Harry and Jack lay. With revolvers in their hands, the boys waited. They knew a shot might destroy the object of their scout, but saw no way out of it. Just at this moment a rabbit scurried across the road, and the dogs, with yelps of delight, took after it.

"Them blame dawgs," growled one of the men, "to make all that fuss over a rabbit. But, Hicks, we 'uns might as well git our hosses an' be goin'."

Just then two horsemen came galloping down the road. They halted at the sight of the two men and one cried, "Why, Sloan and Hicks, what's up? Why aren't you with Red Jerry?"

"Jes' goin' to start," said Sloan. "Whar hev' yo' uns been?"

"Watching the Yanks. We're on our way to report to Jerry. Hicks, the Yanks are camped on your place."

"What's that? The Yanks camped on my place!" cried Hicks.

"Sure. Reckon you'll be short on fodder and pork and sweet 'taters by morning."

"The ole woman and children?" gasped Hicks.

"Reckon they're all right, seeing their natural protector is not at home. The Yanks won't hurt them. Git your hosses and come on. We've been gone too long now. Jerry will give us the devil for not reporting before."

As he was speaking horsemen were heard approaching from the other direction, and in a moment Jerry and Billy rode up.

"Is that you, Stevens?" Jerry demanded angrily.

"Yes," was the hesitating reply.

"I have a notion to have you cashiered for dawdling along the road. You know everything depends on your report. I've been waiting an hour."

Stevens was Jerry's lieutenant and he did not relish the idea of losing his office.

"Captain, I came as quickly as I could," he responded meekly. "You told us to make a thorough examination, and that took time. I arrived here just a moment ago. Sloan halted me, saying his dogs were making a fuss. Then he asked us to wait a minute; saying they would get their hosses and come with us."

"Well, what did you find?"

"The Yanks have gone into camp on Hicks' farm. They seem to be making free with Hicks' fodder, pigs and 'taters (here Hicks was heard to groan), and it looks as if they intended to stay all night."

"What do you say, Billy? Shall we attack them there?" asked Jerry.

"Stevens saw how they were situated. Let's hear what he thinks."

"We might whip them, but it would be a costly job," answered Stevens. "We had a taste of how they can fight this afternoon. My advice is to let them alone tonight and they will think we have run entirely away. When they are not attacked nor hear anything from us, they will move out kind of careless."

"Then your idea is to attack them in the morning?" asked Jerry.

"Yes, and I know a capital place. It is where this road crosses the main road. This side of the main road is covered with bushes for about two hundred yards, then come clear fields. Along the edge of the fields the ground descends this way. We can leave our horses in the field, the men hide in the brush along the road, and when they come along we can annihilate them with one volley."

"What do you think of the plan, Billy?" asked Jerry.

"It's all right. If it works well we ought to finish them without the loss of a man. Even if they discover us, we will have the advantage of position, and we have two men to their one. If we cannot whip them I shall lose my confidence in you as a fighter."

"Well said, Billy. Tomorrow morning it is. I will never rest until I leave the body of Lawrence Middleton swinging on a tree."

Then turning to his lieutenant, Jerry said, "As you know the ground, Stevens, I will leave the details to you. See the troop is on the ground by daylight. Mind you don't fail me."

Thus speaking, Jerry and Billy rode back and in a few moments were followed by the other four.

As soon as the sound of their horses' hoofs died away, Harry drew a long breath. "I say, Jack," he exclaimed, "this is a cinch. Got all we want without half trying. Now to camp as quick as we can."

They started back on the run, but Bruno soon gave notice of danger and they hid while four men passed them.

"Recruits for Jerry," said Harry. "He may have two hundred men by morning."

When they came to the main road both were breathing heavily from their run.

"Let's stop here a moment," panted Harry. "Here is where they propose to ambush us, and a jolly

good place it is for the job. But let's hurry on. Cap can't learn of this too quick."

Again they started on the run, and did not stop until they were halted by the picket guarding the road.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### LIVE—I CANNOT SHOOT YOU

"Back so soon!" cried Lawrence, grasping Harry's hand, as he came up. "Thank God you are back safe!"

"Never had an easier job, did we, Jack?" laughed Harry. "Even Bruno is ashamed of himself, it was so easy."

"And you found out what you were after?"

"Yes," and Harry told his story.

Lawrence and Dan listened in silence. "What do you think, Dan?" asked Lawrence.

"I reckon it's fight or run. When Jerry finds he cannot surprise us, he will attack us openly."

"I don't feel like running," said Lawrence.

"Well, I don't feel inclined that way myself," said Dan, resorting to his tobacco box.

"Why can't we occupy that ambush ourselves?" spoke up Harry, "and let Jerry be the one to be surprised."

"Didn't Jerry leave men on guard?" asked Lawrence, eagerly.

"No, but he may send guards there. If we think of occupying that ground it must be done at once."

The proposition was eagerly discussed, but there were obstacles in the way. Not only were there their own two wounded men, but they had picked up and were caring for six wounded guerrillas. After a short discussion it was decided to leave the camp in charge of ten men. If they were attacked they were to take refuge in a log barn, and defend it until the rest of the troop could come to their rescue.

Dan, much to his chagrin, was left in charge of the camp. "It's no use kicking, Dan," said Lawrence. "I cannot risk going unless you stay, and the boys left here would rebel if you did not stay." So Dan had to remain, much as he wished a hand in the fray.

The ten men to remain were chosen, and the rest of the troop told to get ready to move. "Be as quiet as possible," said Lawrence. "We have not far to go; walk your horses, don't talk, and above all things, don't allow your arms to rattle."

As silent as specters of the night the troop moved away, Harry, Jack, and Bruno in advance to see if the coast was still clear. They reached the cross roads without either seeing or hearing anything of the enemy.

"It's all right, Captain, so far," whispered Harry, as the head of the troop came up, "but we must get into position as soon as possible, for there is no knowing how soon some of the guerrillas may make their appearance."

A hasty examination showed the position all that could be wished. The troop rode up the cross road until the bushes were cleared, and then filed into the open field. Here the men dismounted, and the horses were led back into the brush, where they could easily be concealed. The men then were placed in single line in the edge of the brush facing the open field. A slight ridge in front protected them from observation.

Thus the preparations of Lawrence were exactly the reverse of what Jerry had planned. In an incredibly short time the troop was in position.

"Now," said Harry, "Jack and I will hide in the brush close to where the roads cross. If guards are sent there is where they will be stationed, and I want to be close enough to hear what they say."

Order was given to maintain a strict silence and to molest no one passing along either road.

It was well that all the preparations had been made expeditiously, for hardly had Harry and Jack taken their position when horsemen were heard approaching down the cross road, and soon the shadowy forms of four men appeared.

They halted where the roads crossed and one said, "The orders are that Brown and I stay here while Hayden, you and Singleton are to ride towards the Yankee camp until you reach the rise where you can look down the road to the camp. Don't go any nearer, for we don't want them to know we are within forty miles of them. If the Yanks show signs of moving, report immediately."

Better have Singleton report every hour, anyway."

"All right, Sergeant," replied Hayden. "You may be sure Singleton and I will keep our eyes open." And they rode away.

The men left fell to talking.

"Mighty quiet," said one.

"Yes, but if everything goes right it won't be so quiet when the Yanks move. Why, if the Yanks ride into the trap, we ought to kill every last son of them at the first fire."

Harry and Jack lay chuckling as they listened.

In about an hour the man called Singleton came riding back. "The Yanks are there yet," he reported, "but they are keeping mighty quiet. There's a dim fire burning and we can catch the shadow of one once in a while.

"That's where Jerry wants them to stay. He was afraid they might take a notion to light out during the night."

Singleton rode back and again all was quiet. The Federals lay sleeping, their guns in their hands and revolvers by their sides. It would take but a word to bring them to attention.

About four o'clock the trampling of horses told the guerrillas were coming. In a whisper the word was passed and in an instant every man was alert. But the guerrillas halted some distance from the main road and only three rode forward. They were Jerry, Stevens and Billy.

"How is it, Sergeant?" asked Jerry as they came up.

"As quiet as a churchyard. Hayden and Singleton are down the road watching if the Yanks move. I have Singleton report every hour. There he comes now."

Singleton rode up. "The Yanks are beginning to stir," he reported. "They are building fires, no doubt to make coffee. It makes my mouth water to think of coffee."

"You men will have coffee enough before long, but there'll be a lot of blood spilling first," said Jerry.

"Sergeant, what time was it when you reached this post?" he asked suddenly.

"I should say somewhere near midnight," answered the Sergeant.

"Then the Yankees could have moved before you got here. Stevens, I thought I told you to have this cross-roads guarded and the Yankee camp watched as soon as we decided to attack. Slow, as usual. If this thing goes wrong, you pay for it."

"You know, Captain, it was eleven o'clock before I received orders to post the guard," said Stevens uneasily.

"Well, we have no time to lose now. Go back, have the force moved into the field and see that instructions are carried out to the letter. Sergeant, you call in your men and join the force."

While these orders were being carried out Jerry and Billy lingered a minute looking over the field. "Couldn't be a better place for an ambushade," said Jerry. "If the Yanks ride into it, not a man will come out alive."

"Hark!" suddenly exclaimed Billy.

"What is it?" asked Jerry, startled.

"I thought I heard a horse stamping."

"It's Hayden and Singleton coming in from guard."

"No, it was over there to the left, in the bushes. I'm sure I heard it."

Both gazed anxiously into the bushes, as if to pierce the secret they contained.

Harry's heart stood still; was the ambushade to be discovered at the last minute? But the wind had risen, and nothing was heard but the rustling of the leaves.

"I reckon you must have been mistaken," said Jerry.

"Perhaps," replied Billy, with a sigh. "Jerry, I don't know why, but I feel as if everything is not right. You have told me so much about this Lawrence Middleton that I am afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"I don't know. What if he should discover this ambushade?"

"I will fight him anyway. I now have over a hundred men and he has less than fifty. It will mean some loss to us, but we will have no trouble in beating him."

By this time Hayden and Singleton came up. They reported the Yankees were still in camp, but showed signs of moving.

"We have no time to lose then," said Jerry.

The gray dawn was just breaking in the east when the guerrillas filed into the field and formed their line.

"Move forward!" ordered Jerry, "until you nearly reach the crest of the ridge, then halt and dismount, leaving the horses in charge of every fourth man. The rest of you advance through the brush until you nearly reach the road. Be sure you are well concealed. When the enemy comes along take good aim at the man directly in front of you, and at the command, fire. Let not a shot be fired until the command is given. Give no quarter. Shoot the wounded as you come to them. But if you can capture the Yankee captain alive do so. I will have my reckoning with him afterwards. And it will be a reckoning that will make the devil laugh."

Every word of this was heard by Lawrence and his men, and the men fairly gnashed their teeth as they listened. It boded no good to the guerrillas that fell into their hands.

The guerrillas moved forward until about seventy-five paces from the waiting Federals. The order was given them to dismount, and the men not holding the horses moved forward and formed into line.

Lawrence was going to wait until they were over the ridge, but before he gave the order to advance, Lieutenant Stevens walked towards the bushes as if to reconnoiter, and a few more steps would have taken him into the midst of the Federals.

"Fire!" cried Lawrence.

The men sprang to their feet and poured in a crashing volley. Then with a wild cheer, without waiting for orders, they sprang forward, revolvers in hand, and sent a leaden hail into the demoralized mass. The effect was awful; men and horses went down. Never was surprise more complete.

From out the struggling mass came the groans of the dying and the shrieks of the wounded and terror-stricken. Horses reared and plunged, trampling on the dead and living.

Many fled on foot across the fields, others mounting in wild haste spurred their horses. But one thought filled the minds of all—to get away from that awful place.

Lawrence had given orders for the men holding the horses to rush forward at the first volley, so his men were almost as quickly mounted as the guerrillas.

In vain did Jerry and Billy try to stem the tide and rally the men. They were forced to join in the flight.

It now became a matter of single combat. Each trooper selected his victim and pursued him until he surrendered, or was shot down fighting. Those who had fled on foot were first overtaken and then those who had the poorest mounts.

Lawrence passed several, but he gave them no heed. He had but one thought, to find Jerry Alcorn. At last he saw him mounted on his magnificent gray horse. He was shouting to the men to take to the woods—to abandon their horses—to save themselves if possible.

Lawrence bore down upon him. Jerry saw him coming, and with a roar like a cornered beast, turned to face him. He raised his revolver to fire, but Lawrence was first and the revolver dropped. He was shot in the arm. Defenceless, he wheeled his horse to fly. Again Lawrence fired. Jerry reeled in his saddle, but gathered himself together and urged his horse to greater speed. Close after him came Lawrence.

The chase was a wild one, continued for more than a mile. Lawrence had now drawn his sword and a few bounds of his horse took him to Jerry's side. "Surrender!" he cried with uplifted sword. "Surrender or die!"

Jerry turned to him, his face distorted with rage and fear. Blood was dripping from his right hand. He had dropped the reins and was struggling to draw a revolver from his right holster with his left hand.

"Surrender or I strike!" cried Lawrence, but before the blow could descend he felt a sharp sting in the side and his horse plunged forward and fell. Hardly had Lawrence touched the ground when he heard a voice hiss, "Turn, so you may see who sends you to hell."

As if impelled by the voice, Lawrence turned his head and looked into the blazing eyes of Billy. Her face was distorted with rage and hate. Her horse stood almost over Lawrence and her revolver was pointed at his breast.

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**Her revolver was pointed at his breast.**

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But no sooner did her eyes meet Lawrence's than she gave a start of surprise. A change came over her face and her hand trembled. The muzzle of the revolver sank, was raised, but once more was lowered.

"You—you," she whispered hoarsely. "Oh, God! How can I take your life. You tried to save my father. You pitied me. You—" A softer expression came over her face. She seemed to forget where she was and she whispered, "Then—then I was a girl, an innocent girl, but now—" her voice rose to a shriek. "Now I am a devil; but live; I cannot shoot."

The sound of galloping horses was heard and shouts. Lawrence looked and saw Harry and Jack almost onto them, their revolvers levelled on Billy.

"Great God! don't shoot!" he shouted; and to Billy, "Fly! Fly."

She sank her spurs into her horse and bending low over his neck was away like an arrow, but no avenging bullet followed her.

In a moment Harry and Jack were at Lawrence's side and helped him to his feet. "Captain, you're wounded," cried Harry. "Your side is all bloody." He tore away the coat and shirt.

"Thank Heaven, it's not deep," he exclaimed, "but bleeds freely. How did it happen?"

"I was about to cut down Red Jerry when I received this wound from behind. The same shot must have struck my horse in the back of the head, for he went down like a log."

"And the guerrilla who shot you was the same you told us not to shoot?"

"Yes. She was a woman and she spared my life. I will tell you all about it, but not now."

It was noon before all the men returned from pursuing the guerrillas. Of the band not more than thirty escaped, and most of these by taking to the woods.

When Lawrence gathered his little troop together he found that three had been killed and six wounded, three of them grievously. Of the guerrillas, twenty-five had been slain outright, as many badly wounded, and twenty prisoners had been taken.

Some of the men were for shooting the prisoners. "Red Jerry would not have spared us," they exclaimed.

Lawrence immediately put an end to such talk. "If any of the men have committed crimes that merit death," he said, "they should be convicted by a court-martial. No soldier has a right to put a defenceless man to death for revenge. Barbarity begets barbarity, while mercy appeals to the hearts of the most depraved."

He then told them how his life had been spared by the dreaded wife of Red Jerry.

There was no more talk of shooting the prisoners, and Lawrence noticed that not one of them was insulted or treated brutally.

The Federals remained on the battlefield for three days, caring for the wounded, and Lawrence had it given out that anyone who cared might come to claim the dead or carry away the badly wounded without being molested. The news spread and soon the camp was filled with weeping women and wailing children. Even some men came when they found they could do so safely. From the number of dead and wounded claimed, Lawrence thought Jerry's band must have been made up principally from the neighborhood.

At the end of three days Lawrence began his return march. A couple of farm wagons were pressed into service to convey the wounded. With the slightly wounded who were able to travel he took back with him thirty prisoners and fifty-five horses.

Great was the rejoicing when Rolla was reached, and the success of the expedition became known. Lawrence received a congratulatory message from General Schofield, highly praising him. But there was one Federal officer who did not congratulate Lawrence. Captain Dunlay felt too mortified over his own failure.

Red Jerry still lived. Lawrence had wounded him not only in the arm, but in the thigh. Secreted in the fastnesses of the hills, and tenderly cared for by his wife, he nursed his wounds and thirsted for revenge. Terrible were his imprecations against Lawrence and terrible would be his revenge if ever he got him in his power.

It was fated that he and Lawrence should never meet again. Jerry lived to organize another band and he became even more merciless than ever, and by his side rode his wife, as merciless as he. But there was one secret she never told her husband—that was, that she had spared the life of Lawrence Middleton.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### MARK HAS A RIVAL

It was in September when Mark returned from his last trip. He was so thin and pale that Mr. Chittenden insisted on his taking a few weeks of absolute rest. These weeks were the happiest, as well as the most miserable, that Mark had ever spent. Happy because he was thrown continually in the company of Grace, miserable because he felt a great love springing up in his heart which must never be spoken.

A thousand times he resolved to flee. It would be so easy for him to go on one of his secret missions and never return. But he kept putting off the evil day; it was so near heaven to be near her, to see her every day. He believed he would be content if he could only live as he was always. In his imagination he had invested Grace with more than human attributes, and worshipped her from afar, as he would some angelic being.

Did Grace know the feeling Mark Grafton had for her? The eyes often speak more eloquently than words, and Mark's eyes told her the story of his devotion a hundred times a day. But this knowledge, instead of drawing Grace to him, piqued her. If he loved her why did he remain silent? In all the books she had read, lovers were not backward in telling of their love. But after all, she was glad he was silent, for she was doubtful of her father's approval, and there was that mystery that hung over him, a mystery she had not solved as yet.

"Mark, you are deceiving us," she said boldly one day. "You are not what you pretend to be."

Mark started, but soon recovered his composure. "What makes you think so, Grace?" he asked quietly.

"Because you have represented yourself as a poor, friendless, private soldier. Now, I know you were raised a gentleman. You need not deny it."

"Is that all? I thought—" he stopped.

"Thought what?" asked Grace.

"Nothing, only I am sorry you have such a poor opinion of me, Grace. In saying I am poor and friendless I have not deceived you. I am as poor and as friendless as I have represented."

"But in other things you are silent. You have never told me a word of yourself, of your early life. You only say you are an orphan. Mark, you are not what you pretend. You are holding back something, and I don't like it. Mark, what is it? You can surely trust me as you would a sister."

A look of pain came over Mark's face. "Grace, don't think evil of me," he faltered. "Think of me as a friend, a friend who would willingly die for you, but never anything more than a friend."

He turned away and left her confused, confounded. She saw that he was suffering, but she was angry. He had refused to confide in her. He had even hinted she might think more of him than was wise.

That night as she lay in bed thinking of what he had said, tears of hot anger filled her eyes, "Would die for me," she whispered, "but would never be more than a friend. Who asked him to be

more? He is nothing but a presumptuous boy and should be punished." For the next two or three days she was decidedly cool to Mark.

By the first of November Mark felt he had fully recovered his health, and except for his arm he was as well as he ever would be. He told Mr. Chittenden so, and that it was not right for him to stay longer. But Mr. Chittenden asked him not to go, as he had some work he could help him in. He had orders to gather all the provisions and forage possible. A train was coming from Arkansas to get it. Then, some time in the month, a body of recruits from the northern part of the State were expected. Supplies must be gathered for them.

Mark promised to stay, but the change in Grace cut him to the heart. He thought she was angry because he had refused to tell her his secret. Little did he think he had uttered words which cut more deeply.

It was hard for Grace to think the cause of Mark's reticence was that he had fled for committing some criminal act, but what else could it be? She resolved more firmly than ever to discover his secret.

It is not to be supposed that such a girl as Grace had lived to be nineteen years of age without admirers. There was not a young man in the Ozarks but what would have been her slave if she had given him the least encouragement, but she was such a lady, so far above them, that they were content to worship from afar. They well knew they could be no mate for her. But there was one exception, a young man called Thomas Hobson, known as Big Tom.

Big Tom was a splendid specimen of the human animal, tall, broad shouldered, thick chested, and he had the strength of a giant. If the world had been looking for a perfect physical specimen of man it would have found it in Big Tom. There was also an animal beauty about him that captivated and charmed.

His magnificent body was all he had to recommend him. He was a bully by nature, and used his great strength by imposing on others. He was inordinately vain and conceited, and was continually boasting of his prowess. He was thought brave, for no man in the Ozarks dared to stand up against him in a fight, but at heart he was a coward.

During the first year of the war he was active in driving out and maltreating Union men. Living quite a distance from Mr. Chittenden, he had never seen Grace until the time she went to the rescue of Mr. Osborne. He was one of the hanging party. When Grace so unexpectedly appeared on the scene, her excitement and fierce wrath only heightened her beauty, and Tom gazed at her in admiration. He had been one of the most violent in demanding the death of Mr. Osborne, but now he suddenly changed sides and demanded that he be let go.

Much to Grace's disgust he persisted in paying her attention, and at length proposed. Much to his surprise he was not only refused but refused with scorn and contempt. This aroused every evil passion of his nature.

"You will regret this, Grace Chittenden," he cried furiously. "I 'spose you reckon you be too good for me, but I will give you to understand that there is not a gal in the Ozarks, except you, but would jump at the chance to be my wife."

"Go and make one of them jump, then. I want none of you," replied Grace sarcastically, as she slammed the door in his face, leaving him swearing and cursing.

When Mr. Chittenden was informed of what had occurred he sent word to Tom never to set foot on his premises again.

Mr. Chittenden was too big a man for even Tom to defy. But the affair got out and Tom, when he was not present, became the butt of the county over his presumption in aspiring to the daughter of Judge Chittenden. Tom knew of the merriment it caused and his pride was so hurt that he disappeared and was not heard of for over a year. In the fall of 1862 he suddenly appeared in the Ozarks at the head of a band of guerrillas.

The band numbered about fifteen, and he concluded that with this force he would show Judge Chittenden that he was not afraid of him, and that he was as big a man as he was. Therefore, he rode boldly up to the house. He was mounted on a magnificent horse, an immense plume floated from his hat, and he was decked out in all the grandeur of a bandit chief.

Mr. Chittenden was surprised, but concluded that under the circumstances it was policy to treat him with courtesy. Tom had learned to be polite. He did not mention past differences, or ask to see Grace. He had much to say of his prowess in the field, and of the number of Yankees he had killed, and boasted he held a commission as captain signed by General Price. The main object of his visit seemed to be to impress on the Judge his importance. When he learned Mr. Chittenden was engaged in gathering supplies for the Confederate army he proffered his services to help, which the Judge thought best to accept.

He became quite a frequent caller at the house, and as he did not force his attentions on Grace, she thought it best to do nothing to anger him, but saw as little of him as possible.

"Who is this fellow hanging around here?" asked Tom one day of Mr. Chittenden.

"Do you mean Mark Grafton? He is a Confederate soldier who was cruelly wounded at Pea Ridge, and found his way here. Since then he has rendered valuable services as a courier."



Tom did not rest until he had learned all about Mark that he could, and then growled: "A likely story. He never saw Pea Ridge; he was shot in some brawl. He is simply hanging around here to try and work his way into the good graces of your daughter. Look out for him. I have been watching the fellow; he is a sneak."

"Please keep my daughter's name out of your conversation," replied Mr. Chittenden, angrily, "or you and I will have a settlement. As for Mark, he can take care of himself, and if you know when you are well off you won't pick a quarrel with him."

"What! I skeered of that chap! Why, I could crush him with one finger. But no offence, Mr. Chittenden, only you will find I am right."

From that time on Tom became insanely jealous of Mark. What Tom was saying came to the ears of Mark, and a look came into his face which boded no good to Tom.

One day Mark met Tom alone, and as he was about to pass him with a scowling face and no recognition, Mark hailed him with, "Hold on, Hobson, a word with you."

With a growl Tom wheeled his horse and as he did so his hand went to his revolver.

"Hands up! None of that!" And Tom saw Mark had him covered. He also saw a look in his eyes that made him tremble. Death lurked there.

"Tom Hobson, it's time you and I had a reckoning," said Mark. "I hear you have been calling me a sneak and an impostor, but for that I care nothing. I hear you have been linking my name with that of Miss Chittenden. Now, I give you fair warning, if I ever hear of you taking the name of that young lady on your foul lips I will shoot you like a dog."

"So it's all settled between yo' uns?" Tom managed to stammer. "Beg pardon, didn't know it had went that far." Looking into the muzzle of a revolver made Tom very humble.

"Fool!" answered Mark. "Grace Chittenden is not for such as either you or me. Neither of us is worthy to kiss the ground on which she walks. Now ride away and don't look back. If you do you get a bullet."

Tom meekly did as he was bid, but in his heart there raged the passions of a demon, and he swore Mark Grafton should die.

But what did Mark mean by saying Grace was for neither of them? Tom pondered the question long. Light broke in upon him. It must mean that Mark had proposed and been refused, and being jealous of him had taken this way to scare him away. Perhaps Grace had been captivated by his fine appearance after all, and was only waiting for him to propose.

Again was his vanity in the ascendancy, and he resolved to propose at the first opportunity. It came quicker than he had thought for. Near Mr. Chittenden's house was a shady nook that overlooked the La Belle. It was where the little river dashed and foamed and smote the rocks that would bar its passage. Here Grace loved to sit and watch the conflict, and here she was when Tom Hobson rode by. His heart gave a great bound, for it was the first opportunity he had had of seeing and speaking to her alone.

Reining in his horse, he dismounted, and making what he thought a most courtly bow, he bade her good evening.

Grace arose, an angry flush on her face, and barely acknowledging his greeting, turned to go.

Stepping in front of her he said, "Please don't go. I have been wanting to speak to yo' un ever since I returned. Yo' un know what I told yo' un when I went away. I'm of the same mind still, though I do be a captin now, and expect to be a kernel befo' the war is over."

"Out of my way," exclaimed Grace, white with rage and trying to push past him.

He caught her by the shoulder, "I reckon yo' un think that sneak of a Mark Grafton loves yo' un, but he don't. He told me so," sneered Tom.

"You lie. Mark Grafton is a soldier and a gentleman and you are a coward. Out of my way."

Her hand sought the bosom of her dress, but Tom did not notice. He was white with rage.

"I'll hev' yo' un yet," he shouted. "All hell can't keep me from heven yo'." He attempted to take her in his arms.

He drew back amazed. For the second time that afternoon he was looking into the muzzle of a revolver, and the hand that held that revolver was as firm and steady as the one that held the first.

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**He was looking into the muzzle of a revolver.**

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"Mr. Hobson," said Grace, without a tremor in her voice, "if you do not mount your horse and ride away before I count ten I shall kill you. One, two—"

But Tom did not wait for her to finish; he sprang on his horse and dashed away cursing.

About an hour later, as Mark was returning home, there came the report of a rifle from a hillside and a ball tore away the crown of his hat. All he could see was a little cloud of smoke on the mountain. Putting spurs to his horse he was soon out of danger.

When he reached the house he found Mr. Chittenden in a towering passion. He had just returned, and Grace was telling him of her encounter with Big Tom.

"The wretch is too vile to live," he swore. "I will hunt him to earth, if it takes me a year."

"I am with you," said Mark, showing his hat. "I got that only a few moments ago, so you see I have an account to settle with him, too."

"Why should he shoot at you?" asked Mr. Chittenden, in astonishment.

"You must ask him," answered Mark, carelessly, but as he said it he glanced at Grace. Her face was crimson, and then grew very pale. Had Big Tom told the truth? Had Mark been talking about her to him?

That night it was agreed that the next day a posse should be organized and Big Tom run down, but when morning came it was found Big Tom and his gang had fled during the night.

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## **CHAPTER XX**

### **CAPTURING A TRAIN**

It took Lawrence some little time to reorganize his troop, and to fill the places of those who fell in the fight with Red Jerry.

At last all was ready and the start was made. To reach General Blunt by the circuitous route he intended to take would mean a journey of nearly four hundred miles, much of the way through a country not occupied by Federal troops. The guerrilla bands infesting this country were small, however, and he considered that with his fifty men he would be able to cope with any force he might meet.

For subsistence he would have to depend on the country through which he passed. He knew it was sparsely settled, but as his force was small, and the corn crop had ripened, he believed neither his men nor horses would suffer for food.

To Lawrence the mountain scenery was a continual source of delight. It was November, and the leaves of the forest covering the mountain sides and crowning their summits had been touched by the frost, and painted in all colors of the rainbow. It was a magnificent panorama and on so tremendous a scale that all the works of man seemed as nothing in comparison.

Occasionally a small band of guerrillas was seen, but at sight of the Federals they scurried into the hills and were soon lost to view. Only one band attempted to show fight and they were quickly routed with one killed and two wounded, left on the field. One of these stated that the band was commanded by a man called Big Tom, who was wounded early in the action, how badly he did not know.<sup>[16]</sup>

One day Lawrence stood on a hill overlooking the valley of La Belle. He thought he had never gazed on so lovely a scene, and he wondered who it was who had made his home in that peaceful valley. That it was a home of refinement and luxury was apparent.

As he was looking, to his astonishment, what seemed to be an army came pouring into the valley from the north. It was a motley army, without uniforms, without banners and many without arms. Accompanying the army was a long train composed of every kind of vehicle, from carriages to farm wagons. There was no order in the march, everyone seemed to be traveling as pleased him best.

For a moment Lawrence wondered what it could mean, and then he knew. He had stumbled on the secret route through the Ozarks through which recruits for the South passed. Before Lawrence started on his raid it had been known for some time that numerous small bodies of guerrillas had been gathering, and were making their way to some secret rendezvous, from which they were to start to join Porter in Arkansas.

"How many do you suppose there are?" asked Lawrence of Dan.

"About four or five hundred, I should say."

"Do you think we can handle them?"

"Don't see any reason why we can't," drawled Dan. "Reckon half of them will die of fright when they see us."

Arrangements were quickly made. They were to make a sudden dash and ride the full length of the line, ordering those who had arms to give them up.

Riding into the valley the troop, whooping and yelling like mad men, suddenly dashed upon the unsuspecting recruits. If an army had fallen from the sky they could not have been more astonished. Consternation seized them, and many, leaving everything, fled for the hills, but the greater part of them surrendered, begging for mercy. Not a shot was fired. It was a bloodless victory.

The prisoners were gathered together; they numbered nearly four hundred. Being deprived of all arms, they were powerless. What to do with them was the question.

"The only thing we can do," said Lawrence, "is to parole them."

"And they will keep their parole just as long as we are in sight and no longer," growled Dan.

"Can't help it. It's the only thing we can do."

The train was now thoroughly searched and many of the wagons were found to contain cloth, boots and shoes, and a goodly quantity of powder and shot. All such articles were destroyed and the wagons burnt. The prisoners looked on sullenly.

Lawrence noticed there was a scarcity of provisions, and inquired what it meant. One of the prisoners told him they were suffering from hunger, but had been told they would find plenty of food here in the valley of the La Belle. "We 'uns be jes' starvin'," said the prisoner.

"I will see what I can do," said Lawrence. "If there is food here you will surely get it."

About this time Mr. Chittenden appeared. There had been great excitement at the house when it was known that the Yankees were in the valley and had succeeded in capturing the train. Mr. Chittenden feared that if it became known that he had gathered supplies for the South, not only would he be arrested, but his home and buildings burned.

"I reckon," he said to Grace, "that I will ride down and see what force it is, and who is in command."

"Don't go, father," begged Grace. "You know what you have been doing."

"It is best, Grace. They may not find it out, and if they do, it won't mend matters for me to stay here."

"But, father, you can take to the hills until they are gone."

"What! Leave you here unprotected? Never!"

"Where is Mark?" asked Grace. "I have not seen him for three or four days."

"Gone off on some secret expedition. Said he might be gone several days. Grace, I believe he is

trailing Big Tom. He has an idea he will return and wreak his vengeance on us."

Grace turned pale. "What! Mark gone, all alone?" she asked.

"Yes. Mark seems to prefer to go alone. I don't think we are in as much danger from Big Tom as he thinks, but there is no telling. Some of these guerrilla bands are nothing more or less than robbers, and they care little whom they rob. But I must go now. Don't worry. I won't be long."

Mr. Chittenden was gone some two hours, and when he returned he did not seem in the best of spirits. Grace had been anxiously waiting his return.

"How is it, father?" she cried. "I thought I saw smoke."

"Yes, they have burned a great deal of the train," answered Mr. Chittenden, gloomily. "The worst part of it is, it is only a small scouting party that has done the mischief—not over fifty men—and they have captured four hundred prisoners without firing a gun."

"That doesn't look as if one Southern man could whip ten Yankees," replied Grace, with a twinkle in her eyes.

"Grace, I believe you are glad that train was captured," said her father, with more feeling than he had ever manifested toward her.

"I surely am," replied Grace, undaunted. "You well know I am for the Union."

"Grace, beware! Don't trespass on my love for you too much. Perhaps you will rejoice when I am arrested and dragged off to prison."

"You arrested! You dragged off to prison! Father, what do you mean?" gasped Grace, now thoroughly alarmed.

"It means that your dear friends, the Yankees, have found out that I have been gathering supplies for this train. The officer in command has ordered me to turn over everything I have gathered, and threatened to arrest me for being an agent of the South."

"What will be done with all the food and forage you have gathered? Will it be destroyed?" asked Grace.

"No; not all of it, anyway. The captured men are without food and nearly starving. They have been, or will be, paroled and turned back north. They will be given the food for their return journey to Rolla, where they have been ordered to report."

"Why, father, that is grand. The very ones will get the food that you have gathered it for. The officer in command must be a gentleman. What is he like?"

"He is young—not much more than a boy. He seems to know his business; has perfect control over his men. Moreover, he has the appearance of a gentleman. But you can see for yourself, Grace, for I have invited him and his Lieutenant to take supper with us tonight. And—and, Grace, I will not object to your making known your true sentiments. It may save me from a Federal prison."

"Father, if they arrest you, they will have to arrest me, too. I will be the worst rebel in the State. But, father, they won't arrest you. What have you done?"

"What have I done, child? Has not this house been a rendezvous for those passing to and fro between this State and Arkansas? Has not many a plot been hatched right here? Grace, if everything were known, I should not only be arrested, but this house would be burned and the valley rendered desolate. I am afraid this young Captain knows more than he lets on. But there he comes now, with a lot of wagons for the provisions."

The next two hours were busy ones. A detail of prisoners, under guard, was made to load the wagons, and a herd of beef cattle was driven down. The prisoners feasted that night as they had not in many a day. In fact, many of them were not sorry that they had been made prisoners.

When Lawrence and Dan went to keep their engagement to dine with Mr. Chittenden, they met with as cordial a reception as could be expected under the circumstances. Mr. Chittenden was deeply chagrined over the loss of the supplies he had gathered, but he concealed his disappointment as much as possible.

The meal was all that could be desired. Tilly had surpassed herself. To cook for Yankees was to her a new experience. They were the men who were to free her race, and she looked upon them as almost divine beings.

Grace presided at the head of the table, and more than one glance did Lawrence cast at the lovely girl.

"You have a beautiful home here, Mr. Chittenden," said Lawrence. "I almost envy you. In the spring and summer it must be as near Arcadia as one gets in this world. The scenery is magnificent. I never saw a more beautiful sight than the mountains, covered with their flaming foliage."

"Yes, I like it," replied Mr. Chittenden. "I chanced on the valley many years ago, while hunting, and resolved to make it my home. So wild and unsettled was the country then, that for some

years I had to get all my supplies from St. Louis."

"What a mercy it is that the ravages of war so far have left it almost untouched," answered Lawrence.

"You are the first Yankees who have favored us with a visit," replied Mr. Chittenden, "and pardon me, but I trust you will be the last. But if we are to be visited again, I hope it will be by your troop, Captain, for, under the circumstances, you have been very kind. I hear fearful stories of ravages committed in other parts of the State."

"Missouri certainly has had her share of the war," replied Lawrence, "but it is the guerrilla warfare that has caused it. I trust you have seen little of it here. Are there many Union men residing among these hills?"

Mr. Chittenden hesitated, then replied: "We did have a few Union men in these parts, but the sentiment was so strong against them that many of them were forced to leave. I do not believe in guerrilla warfare, but am powerless to prevent it."

"From the train I captured," said Lawrence, "I would say you were not a stranger to Confederate troops; in fact, I have learned that this valley is a gateway between Missouri and Arkansas, and that many of the guerrillas we drive out of the northern and central part of the State pass through here, and no doubt many pass back the same way."

Mr. Chittenden winced. "I cannot prevent Confederate troops passing through here," he said, "any more than I can prevent you passing through. I admit my heart is with the South, and I do what little I can to help her; but I am sorry to say I have a traitor in my own household—my daughter here."

"What! Your daughter?" cried Lawrence, in surprise, and he looked at Grace with renewed interest.

"Yes, my daughter; she is heart and soul with you Yankees."

Grace was covered with confusion, and started to rise and leave the table.

"Please don't go, Miss Chittenden," begged Lawrence. "Let me hear from your lips that you love the flag of our common country."

"I hate to differ with father," said Grace, "but I do love the flag. Born and living here as free as the birds of the air, I learned to love freedom. I think this is a wicked, wicked war, waged to perpetuate slavery and to destroy the Union. Father and I don't quarrel. He says I am a girl, and it does not matter much what I believe. That may be; but there is one Union flag still cherished in the Ozarks," and as she said it she put her hand in her bosom and drew forth the little flag she had made in St. Louis. "There is not a day," she continued, "that I don't go out and hold it aloft, that it may be kissed by the winds of heaven, and I pray the day will soon come when it will wave over a reunited country."

Lawrence and Dan could hardly refrain from shouting aloud; even Mr. Chittenden was surprised at the feeling Grace showed.

"There, Grace, that will do," he said, crossly. "Don't make——"

Lawrence stopped him. "Mr. Chittenden," he exclaimed, "I congratulate you on having such a daughter, and you can be thankful that you have."

"I do not see why," answered Mr. Chittenden; "but I am thankful that Grace has until now kept her opinions to herself. It would be rather awkward for me to have it generally known."

Grace was excused, and the men, over their cigars, entered into a general discussion of the war, and how it would terminate, Mr. Chittenden holding that the independence of the South was already as good as secured.

As they were about to go, Lawrence said: "Mr. Chittenden, you may think it a poor return for your hospitality, but I came here tonight with the full intention of arresting you."

Mr. Chittenden could only gasp, "What for?"

"Because you are a dangerous man to the cause I serve. I have learned much while I have been here. Not only are you an agent of the Confederate Government to gather supplies, but your house has been a haven for some of the worst guerrillas which infest the State. Even the infamous Porter found rest and shelter here when he fled South."

Mr. Chittenden stood pale and trembling, for he knew Lawrence was speaking the truth; but he was thinking more of Grace than of himself.

"My God! what will become of my daughter, if I am dragged away to a Federal prison?" he cried.

"Mr. Chittenden, do not fear," answered Lawrence. "I can never arrest the father of such a girl as your daughter, and leave her unprotected. She has saved you, and for her sake be more careful in the future."

"For her sake, I thank you; for myself, I have no apologies to make for what I have done," Mr. Chittenden replied, somewhat haughtily. But in his heart he was not sorry Grace had displayed

that little flag.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Lawrence, when he and Dan were alone. "What a girl! She is grand, and such a lady. Who would dream of finding such a girl in the Ozarks? And she is as lovely as a picture—more beautiful than many who reign as belles in St. Louis."

"Look here, Captain," said Dan, solemnly, "don't be falling in love with every pretty face you see. What about that St. Louis girl you are always getting letters from—Lola—confounded childish name—I think you call her. And I've heard you rave about a certain Dorothy, with golden hair. Let the girls alone; they are no good. I never knew a fellow in love who was any good. They go around sighing and writing poetry and making confounded idiots of themselves. I agree that Miss Chittenden is a mighty good-looking girl; but how do you know she isn't fooling us—shook that little flag in our faces to save her father?"

"Oh, Dan, Dan!" laughed Lawrence, "when it comes to girls, you are incorrigible. Dan, tell the truth—were you ever in love?"

"If I ever was, thank God! I am over it," snapped Dan, as he took a chew of tobacco.

Lawrence spent two days in the valley of the La Belle, paroling his prisoners, and loading up their wagons with provisions and forage enough to last to Rolla.

Lawrence started the train back to Rolla, and then bade farewell to the lovely valley, which he left scathless; but for many days there remained before his mental vision the image of the beautiful girl who was loyal to the Union under such adverse circumstances.

All unknown to Lawrence, he had been gone from the valley but a few hours when there came riding up from the South a Confederate cavalry force of one hundred and fifty men, under the command of a Major Powell. They had come to meet the recruits, and had with them a train of empty wagons to take back what was left of the provisions and forage after the recruits were supplied.

When Major Powell learned what had happened, and that all the provisions and forage not given to the recruits had been destroyed, his rage knew no bounds. He first ordered fifty of his men to pursue the train and bring every man back. "Their paroles are not worth the paper they are written on," he roared.

"I will not wait for you," he said to the Captain in command of the fifty, "but shall pursue this audacious Captain Middleton. I will see that not a man of his command gets out of the Ozarks alive."

"That will leave you only one hundred men for the pursuit, Major," said the Captain.

"That is so; but you know we brought arms for one hundred. Call for volunteers from the recruits. Tell them to take the best horses from the train, and report as soon as possible."

The Captain in pursuit of the train had an easier task than he thought, for he had not gone more than five miles when he met nearly two hundred of the men returning, under the leadership of three or four men known as desperate guerrillas. Hardly had the Federals left the train, when a plot was formed to seize it. Nearly half the paroled men entered the plot; those who refused were stripped of everything and sent on their way, destitute.

This reinforcement, so much sooner than expected, greatly elated Major Powell. A mountaineer explained he knew a shorter route than the one the Federals were taking, and although they had several hours' start, he could easily lead a force that could gain their front, and thus they would be hemmed in between the two forces.

Major Powell quickly made his plans. A hundred men, under the command of one of his most trusted officers, were sent to try and get ahead of the Federals, while he, with a hundred more, would follow in quick pursuit.

About this time Mark Grafton appeared on the scene. He, too, brought important news. Believing that Big Tom was contemplating a raid on Mr. Chittenden, and that his sudden departure was only a blind to disarm suspicion, Mark had disguised himself and followed the gang.

"I unearthed the most hellish plot," said Mark. "Big Tom and his gang were to disguise themselves as Federals, raid the plantation of La Belle, kill Mr. Chittenden and me, and carry off Grace, and force her into a marriage with Big Tom. The plot was about to be carried out, when the gang unexpectedly met the force under Captain Middleton, and was routed. And we needn't fear anything from Big Tom for some time, as he is badly wounded."

Mark, on his part, was greatly surprised to hear what had happened in the valley while he was gone. "I would go with you," he said to Major Powell, "but I have an important engagement I must keep. I hope you will overtake and chastise those Yankees as they deserve."

"If I can overtake them, you may depend on it they will get the chastisement," responded the Major, as he rode away.

Mark then related to Mr. Chittenden more fully what he had found out as to Big Tom's plans, and added: "If I were you, Mr. Chittenden, I would say nothing about this to Grace, for it might unnecessarily alarm her. She is safe, at least, until Big Tom gets well. If I did not think so, I would not rest until I had hunted the dog down. As it is, I must be absent for a week or two, but

not longer."

Mark waited until nightfall, and then he, too, rode away.

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## CHAPTER XXI

### THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS

It was the second day after Lawrence had left the valley of La Belle, and so far nothing of interest had occurred. Lawrence and Dan were riding along side by side, when suddenly a stone struck in the road just ahead of them, causing their horses to rear and plunge. The road ran close to the bluff, and no doubt it was from the top of the bluff that the stone was thrown.

A careful scrutiny of the bluff revealed nothing, and they were about to ride on, when Lawrence suddenly exclaimed: "Hold on! there's a paper wrapped around that stone." Springing from his horse, he secured the paper. It proved to be a rude scrawl, telling them they were being pursued by a hundred men, and that another hundred had been sent to head them off.

"What do you think of that?" asked Lawrence, handing the scrawl to Dan.

Dan deciphered it, after some trouble, and then remarked: "A hoax, probably."

"It's no hoax, Dan. We may as well be prepared."

"But where did the two hundred men come from?" asked Dan. "Even if those fellows who were paroled turned back, they had no arms."

"It's a raiding party from the South, in all probability," answered Lawrence, "and we left just in time to miss them."

"Whew! Why couldn't we have stayed a few hours longer?"

"What! And fought the two hundred?"

"Sure; we could have licked them easily."

"Well, I am not sorry we left. I am not aching for a fight against such odds; but if they overtake us, we will show them what we can do. What puzzles me is, who gave us the warning?"

"Give it up," said Dan.

Harry was now called, and told what had happened. "You take Jack and Bruno and guard the rear. Don't let those fellows get close to us, without our knowing it."

"No danger, as long as Bruno is alive," laughed Harry.

"What about the front?" asked Dan. "We may run into those fellows who have gone to head us off."

"They haven't had time to head us off yet," said Lawrence, "and before they meet us, I want to teach those fellows in the rear a lesson."

The horses began to show signs of weariness, and, coming to a settler's cabin, around which grew a fine field of corn, Lawrence, concluded to halt, rest and feed the horses, and allow the men to make some coffee. There were some fine pigs running around, and two of these were slaughtered. The owner of the corn and hogs made strenuous objections to this appropriation of his property. He was a tall, gaunt mountaineer, and his face showed that he was both cunning and crafty.

"Are you Union or Confed?" asked Lawrence.

After emptying his capacious mouth of an enormous quid of tobacco, he drawled: "I don't know. Yo' uns be the first Yanks I hev seen. I allers reckoned I was a Confed, but now that yo' uns hev tuk my cohn and hawgs, I reckon I be Union. If I be Union, I get pay for my cohn and hawgs, don't I?"

Laughing, Lawrence handed him ten dollars, saying, "I'll bet you a ten against that one that you will be Confed before night. There's a band of Confederate cavalry chasing us."

"Is thar? Then I won't bet," replied the fellow, grinning. "It's too risky. They might p'int a gun at me, and make me yell for Jeff Davis."

"I reckon you wouldn't wait for the gun to be pointed before you yelled," said Lawrence; "but you're welcome to the ten."

"Ought to be fifty," growled the fellow, as he turned and went into the house, and they saw him no more.

That night Major Powell camped on his place, and made free with both his corn and hogs, but he made no objection; neither did he hurrah for Jeff Davis, for he was not there.

The Federals had not gone far from the cabin when the valley narrowed down and the mountains arose steep and precipitous on each side.

"It's lucky," said Dan, "that these hills are not filled with guerrillas, or they would be taking pot-shot at us. I will feel safer——"

He did not finish the sentence, for there came the sharp crack of a rifle from the hillside, and a piece of the crown of Dan's hat went flying through the air. He pulled off his damaged headgear and, gazing ruefully at it exclaimed: "A blame good hat spoiled; but my head is safe."

"Charge the bluff!" shouted Lawrence; but there was no need of the order. A half dozen troopers had already dismounted, and were scaling the bluff to where a small wreath of smoke was seen curling. Before they were half way up, there came the sound of another shot, but this time the whiz of no ball was heard.

Soon the men reached the spot where the smoke had been seen, and their exclamations of surprise were heard.

"What is it?" shouted Lawrence.

"Dead man up here. No signs of any live one."

"Well, look around sharp, and then come down," replied Lawrence.

The men soon returned, and told a strange story.

"We found," said the sergeant in charge, "whom do you think? Our friend who sold us the corn and hogs. He was lying behind a rock; his gun, loaded and cocked, was on the rock, and no doubt he was just going to take another shot at us, when some one shot him through the head from behind. He had just been shot, for the fresh blood was gushing from the wound as we came up. But we neither saw nor could we find any trace of the one who shot him. It's blame curious. I feel creepy. These mountains must be haunted."

"If they are, the spirits who haunt them must be very friendly to us," said Lawrence; "but, as you say, it is a singular circumstance. I can't make it out. Why doesn't the fellow show himself, if he is our friend?"

Many and various were the opinions expressed, but no satisfactory solution was arrived at.

The day closed dark and gloomy; great clouds swept across the sky, and the wind roared through the forest. It became so dark, and traveling so difficult, that Lawrence decided to camp for the night, and risk the chance of being overtaken. The place chosen to camp was a natural amphitheater which ran back into the mountains. It was overhung by the giant trees growing on the mountain.

Supper over, the men sat for some time around their little campfire, talking over the events of the day; but gradually the camp became quiet, and nothing was heard but the stamping of the horses and the roaring of the wind.

It was nearly midnight when the soldiers were aroused, not by the guard, but by Bruno, who came bounding into camp, growling fiercely, every hair on his back erect. He was trembling violently, either from fear or excitement.

"Why, what's the matter, Bruno?" cried Harry. "I never saw you act like this before."

"I believe he is scared," said Lawrence. "Andrew Jackson! Bruno scared!"

"I never knew him to be scared," said Harry, "but I believe he is. See how he trembles."

Before an investigation could be made, the horses began to rear and plunge, and the sentinels called out they were breaking loose.

"See to the horses," shouted Lawrence.

The men were just in time, as several of the horses had broken their halters. As it was, they had hard work to keep them from getting away.

"The horses are badly frightened. They are trembling like leaves," said the men.

"It must be some wild animal," said Lawrence. "Men, stay by the horses; Dan, Harry and I will investigate."

Lawrence took a burning brand from the fire, and all three, well armed, started to find the cause of the trouble. Bruno at first hung back, but when he saw Harry start, he followed; but it was noticed he kept close to his master's side.

The dog kept looking to the cliff back of their encampment. A large tree grew close to the cliff, and an animal could spring into it from the cliff. Cautiously the three men advanced.

"See there," said Dan, pointing up in the tree.

Lawrence looked, and saw up in the tree what looked like two coals of fire.

"Hold your brand where I can see the sights of my gun," whispered Dan.



Lawrence did so. Dan took a quick aim and fired. There came a terrible scream, a crashing among the branches, and then a huge panther lay struggling on the ground, tearing up the earth in his death agony.

Bruno seemed to have recovered from his fright, for he was about to spring on the struggling animal, when Harry cried, "Back, Bruno, back!"

Still Bruno would have rushed to his fate if Lawrence had not struck him a sharp rap over the nose with the burning brand.

At last the beast lay still.

"That was a good shot, Dan," said Lawrence. The ball had struck the panther squarely between the eyes.

"What could have induced him to visit our camp?" asked Harry.

"The smell of the meat the boys roasted for supper," replied Dan. "You know, we brought along some of those pigs we had for dinner."

Some of the soldiers insisted on skinning the beast and taking the skin along as a trophy. As it was, there was little more sleep in the camp, for the horses continued to be restless, and it was hard to keep them quieted.

"The panther's mate may be around," said Dan. "It is well to be on the lookout."

Bruno was of no more use, for he had become sulky and gone and lain down. He could not understand that the blow Lawrence gave him had saved his life.

If there was another panther around, he did not show himself, and at the break of day the troop was once more on the way.

Along in the afternoon, Harry came rapidly riding from the rear, saying the foremost of the pursuers had been sighted. Hardly had he made his report when the faint sound of three or four shots was heard.

"Harry, you, with Dan and Bruno, now take the advance," commanded Lawrence. "That is where we will have to look now for a surprise. Dan, take command, and ride at a good pace. I, with ten men, will look to the rear, and hold back the enemy."

"Why not stop and fight them?" grumbled Dan. "I don't like this idea of running."

"Because I don't wish to have a battle here, if I can help it," replied Lawrence. "If we fight, especially on anything like even terms, some of the men will be sure to be killed or wounded. Think of leaving any of the boys here in the mountains, wounded! It would be better for them to be shot than left wounded, for they would be sure to be murdered by guerrillas."

"Reckon you are right; but it is against my principles to run," sighed Dan.

"Don't be downhearted, old fellow," laughed Lawrence. "I expect to give them a fight; but I want to choose the ground and the manner of fighting."

Dan's face brightened. "That's all right, Captain," he exclaimed. "I might have known you were up to some of your tricks."

Lawrence now rode back to take charge of the rear. Major Powell, knowing he had two men to Lawrence's one, eagerly pressed forward; but his enthusiasm was a little cooled when his advance was driven back with a loss of one killed and two wounded, and he began to be a little more careful.

By taking advantage of every little inequality of ground, Lawrence was able to hold the enemy well in check for some miles; but at length they came to a place where the valley spread out, and flank movements were easy, and it soon became a test of speed and endurance of the horses.

"This will never do," thought Lawrence. "I must find a place to stop and fight them, and that soon."

Leaving the rear guard in charge of a sergeant, he rode rapidly to the front.

"Horses getting winded," said Dan. "We will have to stop and fight."

"At the first favorable place, Dan. Tell the boys to keep up the pace a little longer."

Lawrence now urged his horse to his utmost speed. He rode two or three miles without finding a favorable place for an ambushade, and was about to halt and choose as good ground as possible and give battle. He had no fears of the result—only that many of his men might be killed or wounded. Just as he came to this conclusion, to his delight, he saw the valley close in front of him. A great hill pushed into it, leaving only a narrow gateway. Beyond this the valley turned, and the force would be entirely concealed by the hill. It took Lawrence but a minute to form his plan of battle. Just before the gateway was reached, the road ran close to the base of the mountain, which was thickly wooded.

Dan, in command of the advance, now dashed up. "Captain, we must fight. The horses are all in."

"Yes, Dan, it's fight now. Dismount your men, and have the horses taken around that point, out of sight. One man can care for six horses. Conceal the rest of your force in the brush along the base of the mountain. Be quick. If I succeed in leading them into the trap, you will know what to do." Thus saying, Lawrence clapped spurs to his horse, and rode for the rear.

Lawrence found the rear guard hard pressed.

"Look out, Captain; they are flanking us, and you are in range," called one of the men.

Just then three or four balls whizzed close to Lawrence's head. Wheeling his horse, he shouted, "Follow me!" and the rear guard went down the road as if in swift retreat. The enemy followed with wild cheers.

The rapid pursuit had strung out the Confederates, and Major Powell had ridden back to hurry up the stragglers, leaving the advance in charge of his senior captain. This officer, thinking the Yankees in full retreat, and that he might gain some honor, pressed the pursuit with vigor.

Straight past where Dan and his men were concealed, Lawrence rode, but he halted his little squad where the valley narrowed.

If the Confederates had not been so eager in the pursuit, they might have seen the bushes tremble or caught the gleam of a gun barrel; but they only had eyes for the flying Yankees. When they saw the Federals had halted, they also halted, taking time to close up, and that was just what Lawrence wanted.

Ordering his men to fire a volley, Lawrence again wheeled as if in retreat.

"Forward!" shouted the Confederate captain. "Charge! Ride over them!"

Suddenly, from the side of the road, there came a crashing volley. The destruction was awful; men and horses went down in heaps.

"Wheel and charge!" shouted Lawrence; and down on the terror-stricken Confederates came Lawrence with his ten men. The panic became a rout. The enemy thought only of getting away. In vain Major Powell tried to stop his men; he, too, was borne back in the confusion.

Quickly as possible, Dan had the horses brought up, and he and his men joined in the pursuit. For two miles it was kept up; then Lawrence ordered a halt. He saw that Major Powell had succeeded in rallying some of his men, and taken a position that could not be carried without loss.

All along the road lay dead and wounded men and horses, and where the first volley was fired the road was filled with the dead and dying.

It was a sight that made Lawrence's heart ache; but he could not stop even to give relief, for Harry and Jack came back with the startling news that there was a large force in front, not more than three miles away.

Lawrence rallied his men, and, to his intense relief, found he had only three men slightly wounded. It was almost a bloodless victory. The question was, what to do now. While debating, one of the men suddenly exclaimed, "Look, there!"

On a rock on the mountain-side, some three hundred yards away, stood the figure of an old man. A long white beard swept his breast, and he was bent with age. He stood leaning on a staff, as if weary.

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### **An old man leaning on a staff.**

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When he saw he was seen, he beckoned for some one to come to him. Two or three of the soldiers started, but he peremptorily waved them back. Lawrence then started, and the old man stood still.

"Don't go, Captain," cried the men. "It may be a trap."

"I will be careful," replied Lawrence. "Shoot at the first sign of treachery."

A dozen carbines covered the old man, but he did not seem to notice it. When Lawrence was within about fifty yards of him, he motioned for him to stop; then, in a high, cracked voice, exclaimed: "There is danger ahead."

"I know it," replied Lawrence.

"A little ahead, close to that large tree, you will find a faint trail. Take it. It will lead you over the mountain into another valley, where you can go on your way in safety. Delay twenty minutes, and all will be lost. Farewell."

The old man stepped from the rock and disappeared. Lawrence rushed to where he had been standing. Nothing was to be seen. It was as if the earth had swallowed him.

He returned and told what had happened, and the wonderment was great.

"No time to lose," exclaimed Lawrence. "I shall take his advice."

In single file, the men turned into the trail. The way was steep, but not impassable, and soon the forest swallowed them up.

Not until they were over the mountain, was there any opportunity of discussing the strange warning they had received.

"Can it be that old man has been our guardian angel all the time?" asked Lawrence.

"Impossible," said Dan. "We received the first warning when we had hardly left the valley of La Belle. We have come fast. How could that old man have come over the mountains and got ahead of us?"

"And where did he go when he disappeared so suddenly?" asked one.

"And who shot the guerrilla?" questioned another.

"It's a secret only the mountains can tell. I have heard they were haunted," said Dan.

"It's God's hand," said one of the men, a solemn, clerical-looking fellow, whom the men called Preacher. Before he was a soldier, he had been a Methodist class leader; and there was not a braver man in the company.

Argue as they might, they could come to no conclusion. To them it was a mystery that was never

solved.

It was weeks before Lawrence fully knew of the danger from which the old man had saved him. Captain Turner, in his swift ride to get ahead of him, had fallen in with a scouting party of fifty Confederate cavalry; not only this, but his force had been augmented by guerrillas until he had fully two hundred men, well armed and mounted. Had Lawrence met this force in the narrow valley, he could not have escaped defeat.

The horror and amazement of the advance guard of Turner's force may be imagined when they came upon the scene of conflict. That the battle had just been fought, was evident; the smoke of the conflict had not entirely cleared from the field. What was more surprising, not an armed man was in sight—neither Federal nor Confederate.

They listened, but could hear no sound of conflict. Captain Turner came up. For a moment he gazed on the scene of carnage, and then cried: "Great God! Major Powell ran into an ambush, and his force has been annihilated. The dead are all our men. But where are the Yankees?"

"Doubtless in pursuit of the few of the Major's force that escaped," replied an officer.

"That is so," cried Turner. "Forward, men! Let our war-cry be: 'Powell and Revenge!' Give no quarter! Let every one of the cursed Yankees die."

They rode nearly four miles before they came on to Major Powell and the remnant of his force. They had continued falling back until they were certain they were not pursued.

Of his hundred men, the Major had succeeded in rallying about forty. The rest had been killed or wounded, or had fled. Some of them did not stop until they reached the valley of La Belle, bringing with them the story of the disaster, saying that of all of Powell's force they alone escaped.

"Did you meet and exterminate the Yankees?" was the first question put to Captain Turner by Major Powell.

"I have seen no Yankees," was the surprising answer.

Major Powell could only gasp, "Seen no Yankees?"

"No; not one."

"Then the mountains must have opened and swallowed them."

Full explanations were made, and the force returned to bury the dead and care for the wounded. The only possible explanation they could make for the disappearance of the Federals was that they had hid on the mountain-side and let the force of Captain Turner pass, then come down and resumed their flight.

As they debated, suddenly, above them, on the mountain-side, appeared the figure of an old man, and his voice came down to them, loud and shrill: "Woe, woe, woe to them who raise their hands against the flag of their country!"

"Damn him! Fire!" shouted Turner.

A hundred rifles blazed. There came back to them a mocking laugh, and the old man disappeared. The mountain was scoured, but not a trace of him could be found.

A superstitious fear fell upon the whole force. The old man must have been the devil, they argued, and he had helped the Yankees to escape.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### MARK CONFESSES HIS LOVE

It was a day or two after the appearance of the fugitives from Powell's force that Mark Grafton returned to the La Belle. He seemed tired and careworn, but reported that his trip had been entirely successful.

When told of the disastrous defeat of Powell's force, he was astounded. "Had I expected such a result," he exclaimed, "I would have gone with him. Ran into an ambush, did he? I believe, if I had been with him, I could have prevented that, for I am used to fighting just such fellows, and am up to all their tricks."

"You seem to have a good opinion of yourself," remarked Grace, somewhat sarcastically.

What she said, and the tone in which she said it, cut Mark to the heart. "Your rebuke is just, Grace. No man should boast," he said, as he turned away.

That night Mark lay thinking. That Grace had changed, he could plainly see. It must be because he had refused to tell her his secret. "I must go away, and never return," he sighed. "It is the only way. If I could only stay near her, to see her every day, to be her slave, I would be contented."

Then the thought of Big Tom came into his mind. He knew there was real danger from that source. No one knew better than he what the guerrillas of the State were fast becoming—bands of robbers that preyed on friend and foe alike. He felt that Mr. Chittenden's being a Confederate would not save him. To go away and leave Grace exposed to such a great danger would be to him a torture.

Sleep did not visit him that night, and when morning came he was no nearer a decision than he was the night before. He arose; white and haggard. The lines in his face showed what he had suffered.

That night also seemed to have changed Grace. She came to him and, holding out her hand, said: "Mark, I'm sorry I spoke as I did last night. Forgive me." Then, looking at him, she cried: "Foolish boy! I believe you took to heart what I said. Mark, did it hurt you so?"

"There is nothing to forgive, Grace," he replied, gently. "I passed a restless night, but it was not what you said that caused it, but the thought that I had already remained here too long; and yet it is hard to go from those who are so kind to me."

"Why go at all?" asked Grace. "You belong here. Did we not bring you back from the very brink of the grave? I have heard father say he wished you would always remain. He has taken a great fancy to you."

A great light came into Mark's face. He took a step toward her, as if he would clasp her in his arms. "Grace! Grace!" he cried, then stopped and turned deadly pale.

"Mark, what is it? Are you sick?" asked Grace, anxiously.

"No; I did turn a little faint, but I am over it now. I will think over what you said."

He did think it over, and came to the conclusion that he must go; for, if he stayed, the time would come when he would have to confess his love for Grace. He trembled when he realized how near he had come to telling her. But it was not many hours before he was telling her.

A man came riding into the valley from the north. He was burning with fever, and reeled from side to side in his saddle. He was lifted from his horse, and carried into the house.

"I am afraid I am done for," he said, faintly, as he was gently placed on a bed. "I was told I would find a crippled Confederate soldier here, called Mark Grafton, who sometimes acts as the bearer of dispatches. Is he here now?"

"He is," answered Mr. Chittenden.

"I must see him—see him before it is too late. I feel the hand of Death upon me."

Mark was called, and the sick man, between gasps, told his story. He said his name was Paul Dupont, and he was the bearer of important dispatches to General Hindman. "I was sick at the time they asked me to carry them, and tried to beg off, but they said the dispatches were so important they could only be trusted to a brave and trusty man, and they knew I was one. 'Carry them as far as Judge Chittenden's, on the La Belle,' they said; 'then, if you are not able to go farther, deliver them into the hands of a crippled Confederate soldier there, by the name of Mark Grafton.' I can go no farther. The hand of Death is already on me. You will find the dispatches sewed in the lining of my coat. Take them and deliver them into the hands of General Hindman."

"To Hindman!" gasped Mark.

"Yes—don't fail!" whispered Dupont, as he sank back on his pillow, exhausted. He closed his eyes; his breath came shorter and shorter, and he soon passed away, without speaking again.

Mark stood as one confounded. A sacred trust had been committed to him—one that took him where he never wished to go—into Arkansas. No one except himself could realize the dangers that he would run.

When Mr. Chittenden heard of the dead man's request, he said: "Mark, will you go? Those dispatches mean much; they may mean the redemption of the State. But the danger—Mark, I hate to see you go."

Mark thought a moment, and then, drawing himself up to his full height, his face set and determined, he answered: "I will go. It is a sacred trust—it is for my country."

Mr. Chittenden and Mark searched the effects of the dead man, and found the dispatches as stated. They also found he had about one hundred dollars in Federal money and two thousand dollars in Confederate money on his person. Among the papers found was a pass from General Hindman, asking all good Confederates to aid the bearer all possible.

"No doubt Dupont was a trusty spy for General Hindman," said Mr. Chittenden. "Mark, you are stepping into dangerous shoes; yet, if you were my son, I should bid you go. As for the money, keep that; no doubt it was given Dupont for expenses, and you are now in his place."

Mark's preparations were soon made, but the roll which he strapped behind his saddle was much larger than he generally took. When he was ready, he sought Grace, to say good-bye. She was not in the house, and knew nothing of what had taken place.

He sought her in her favorite nook by the side of the La Belle, and there he found her gazing

pensively into the water. Mark thought there was a look of sadness on her face. She looked up in surprise as he rode up.

"Going away so soon?" she asked.

Dismounting, Mark hitched his horse, and, going up to her, said: "Yes, Grace, I am going again, and on one of the most dangerous missions I ever undertook. I have come to say good-bye. If I never see you again, God bless you!"

The girl turned pale. "Why go, Mark, if it is so dangerous?"

"It is my duty."

"Mark, don't go!" Tears were gathering in her eyes.

He looked at her, his whole face eloquent with love. All the resolutions he had made were forgotten.

"Grace, I must say what I have told myself a thousand times I would never say. Grace, I love you—love you better than I do my own soul, and because I so love you, it is better that I go away and never return."

"I don't understand," she murmured. "You said things the other day I didn't understand, and you made me angry."

"Grace, you are fit to reign a queen in some palace. I am poor and unknown. But it is not my poverty that has kept me from declaring my love. It is because I am unworthy of you—because I have deceived you in some things. Grace, I am not worthy to kiss the earth you tread on."

A death-like pallor came over the face of the girl. "Mark, for the love of Heaven, tell me—tell me! Are you married, or have you committed some heinous crime?"

"Married! Why, Grace, I never thought of love until I saw you. I knew not what love was. Neither am I a criminal. Things are done in war that would be criminal in times of peace."

"Then why do you say you are so unworthy? Mark, it's that terrible secret you are keeping from me! Mark, tell me what it is?" She put her hands on his shoulders, looking yearningly in his face.

Mark Grafton shook like a leaf. "Grace! Grace!" he cried, "don't tempt me! You know not what you ask."

"Then you refuse to tell me?" She had taken her hands from his shoulders; there was an angry flush on her cheeks.

"I can't, Grace! Oh, God! if I could!"

"Go!" she said. "For once, you have told the truth, when you said you were not worthy of me. All the rest you have said are lies—lies. You love me, you say, better than your own soul, and yet you refuse to tell me what it is that would keep me from you. If you loved me, you would trust me, confide in me. By your actions you have shown yourself unworthy of the love of any true woman. I have loved you as a sister—nothing more—but even that love is gone now. Go! I never want to see you again," and she turned from him.

A moment Mark stood; then he said, gently: "Grace, good-bye. It is best that you feel as you do, for I now know that it is only I who will suffer. I love you, Grace, and always will, but it will be a pure, a holy love. Nothing you can say or do can take from me the blessed privilege of loving you. Grace, will you not say good-bye?" No answer.

Mark turned wearily, and mounted his horse. As the sound of the horse's hoofs came to her, Grace started as if from a dream. She looked. He was already riding away. She rushed toward him, with outstretched arms.

"Mark! Mark! Come back!" she cried. "It was I that lied. I love you! I love you!"

He did not hear, or, if he heard, did not heed, for he rode on without looking back. She watched until he had disappeared in the distance; then, pressing her hands to her heart, sank down. The wind rustled through the trees, and sent a shower of withered leaves down upon her.

"Like my hopes," she murmured, "withered and dying; yet, even in death, they are beautiful!"

She noticed the imprint of Mark's foot where he had stood when he declared his love. A leaf, all orange and gold, with a splash of red in the center, had fallen and half concealed the imprint. She stooped and picked it up.

"He said he was not worthy to kiss the earth on which I tread," she whispered, and she pressed the leaf to her lips; then, with a shudder, she threw it from her, for she noticed her lips had touched the splash of red, which to her looked like blood.

## INTO THE LION'S MOUTH

For a few miles after leaving Grace, Mark rode as if pursued by an enemy. Wild thoughts rushed through his mind; but at length he became calmer.

"No, no," he soliloquized, "I cannot leave Grace to the vengeance of Hobson, and I am sure he will seek vengeance as soon as he recovers from his wound. But am I not leaving her? Well do I realize the danger I am running. It is doubtful if I ever come back. An ignominious death may await me. I have put duty above love. But, Grace, if I live, my duty, after this, will be to guard and protect you. Unseen and unknown, I will be near you. To see you from afar will be heaven."

Mark soon halted by a pool of clear water, and undid the roll behind his saddle, from which he took various articles. Soon no one would have known him as the young man who had ridden away from the La Belle. He looked ten years older; the color of his hair was changed, and a fine mustache adorned his upper lip.

He studied his face for a while as he leaned over the clear water. "It will do," he said. "But what if I meet Colonel Clay?"

For three days after that Mark rode without an adventure, but on the fourth day he was chased by a squad of Federal cavalry. A lucky shot killed the horse of his foremost pursuer, and he escaped. Skirting the flank of the Federal army, he reached the headquarters of General Hindman at Van Buren, on the Arkansas River.

Here, behind the Boston Mountains, Hindman had gathered an army estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand men. Opposed to him was General Blunt, with an army of not over seven or eight thousand men. Hindman thought that by a swift movement he could crush Blunt before he could be reinforced, and then, meeting any reinforcements which might be marching to his relief, whip them in detail, thus wresting Missouri from the grasp of the Federals.

He was now only waiting dispatches from Missouri informing him of the number and position of the Federal troops in the State, and the number of recruits he could reasonably expect to join him, once in the State, and where.

It was these dispatches that Mark Grafton was carrying. If captured with them, Mark well knew what his fate would be. There were other reasons, known only to himself, which made it extremely perilous for him to enter the Confederate lines.

It was late in the afternoon when Mark was challenged by the outposts of the Confederate army. He stated that he was a courier from Missouri, with important dispatches for General Hindman, and demanded that he be conducted to headquarters at once. It was dark before headquarters were reached, but Mark was granted an immediate audience with the General.

"What is your name?" asked the General, as Mark handed him the dispatches.

"Grafton—Mark Grafton."

"I was expecting dispatches, important ones, but from another source. I wonder what these can be?"

He opened them and, glancing at them, exclaimed: "Why, these are the very dispatches I was looking for! I expected them to be delivered by a man named Dupont. How did you come by them?"

"Dupont is dead," replied Mark, solemnly.

"Dupont dead! Great God! How did he die? Was he captured?"

"No." Mark told the full particulars of Dupont's death, and how in his dying moments he had committed the dispatches to him.

"Poor Dupont!" sighed Hindman. "He was my most trusted spy, and he died in the discharge of his duty."

Then, scrutinizing Mark closely, he said: "You have made good time in coming from Chittenden's. Have any trouble?"

"Only once. I put one Yankee cavalryman out of commission."

"Good! How would you like to take Dupont's place?" asked Hindman, abruptly.

"General, I would make a poor spy. I could be identified too easily," and Mark touched his crippled arm.

"Where did you get that?"

"In one of the little partisan battles in Missouri," answered Mark, without hesitation.

"I am sorry," answered Hindman. "I wished to send some dispatches back with you."

"I can take them," promptly answered Mark. "And, if you wish, I can act as dispatch-bearer for you in Missouri. I am well acquainted in the State, and am known to most of the guerrilla leaders. It is through them I receive and deliver my dispatches. I am careful never to enter a Federal

camp. I am at present staying at Chittenden's, and will cheerfully execute any commission you may send me. I have carried dispatches for Colonel Clay several times."

"Just the thing. Consider yourself engaged," cried the General. "I recall now that I have heard Colonel Clay speak of you. I am sorry the Colonel is away on special duty."

Mark was not the least bit sorry, but his looks did not show it. Clay would not have known him in his disguise, and would have denounced him as an impostor.

"General, one thing more," said Mark. "Mr. Chittenden, in looking over the effects of Dupont, found several little trinkets that his family might wish to have. There was also one hundred dollars in Federal money and two thousand dollars in Confederate money on his person. Here is everything."

"You can keep the Federal money. The Confederate will be of little use to you in Missouri. Here is another one hundred in Federal money, but remember this money is a sacred trust, and only to be used for expenses when on business for the Confederacy."

"It will be so considered," said Mark as he took the money. "General, will it be possible for you to have your dispatches ready by morning. Mr. Chittenden wished me to get back as quickly as possible. He is in trouble."

"Trouble? What trouble?"

"Why, haven't you heard? The valley of the La Belle has been raided by a force of Federals, the provisions and forage he had gathered captured, and four or five hundred recruits coming from the central and northern part of the State taken prisoners and paroled."

"I had not heard of it," said the General, greatly excited. "When did it happen?"

"Only a few days before I left. But that is not all. Just as the Federals left, Major Powell came up from Arkansas with a train to get the provisions and forage and escort the recruits. He pursued the Federals, but fell into an ambush and his command was cut to pieces."

"Do you know who commanded the Federals?"

"Yes, a Captain Lawrence Middleton."

"The devil! He had much to do with frustrating our plans last summer."

"Yes, and but a few weeks ago he almost annihilated the band of Red Jerry. We are trying to lay plans to capture him."

"Well, this is bad news, but we will try and turn the tables before many days. I will have my dispatches ready by morning. Make yourself comfortable until then." With a wave of the hand the General dismissed him.

The next morning Mark called early for the dispatches and found the General in close conversation with a thick, heavy-set man whose face showed both courage and determination. When Mark saw him he gave a start. "I know you, my friend," he thought, "and it will be an unfortunate thing for me if you recognize me."

"Ah, Grafton, is that you?" said the General. "Glad to see you. Allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Spencer. Spencer, this is the young man I was telling you about. Grafton, Spencer is now my most trusted spy, since Dupont is gone. He will ride part way with you."

Mark extended his hand cordially, but there was no warmth or cordiality in the hand that Spencer gave him. Instead, he looked as if he would read the inmost thoughts of Mark's soul, but Mark met his gaze steadily and coolly, as if he did not know his life was hanging in the balance.

At length Spencer said, "Glad to meet you, Grafton. Excuse me for scrutinizing you so closely, but we are in the same business, and as I may have you for a companion sometime, I like to measure my man before I tie to him."

"Well, how do I measure?" asked Mark, with a smile.

"I reckon you will do."

"I trust so," rejoined Mark. "But you made a mistake in saying I was in the same business. I don't believe I have nerve enough to be a spy. I am simply a courier, and carry what others have gathered. It takes nerve to penetrate the enemy's camp. Nerve such as you have, Spencer."

Spencer's face lit up with a smile. "You rate me too highly, Grafton," he answered. "But I certainly have been in some tight places, and I reckon you could relate some startling adventures if you would."

Mark had been handed his dispatches, and was about to depart when General Frost was announced.

"Hold on a minute," said Hindman. "General Frost may have some word he would like to send."

"Sending a courier into Missouri?" asked Frost.

"Yes, the same young man who brought those dispatches last night, that Dupont should have



brought. I am sorry to say Dupont is dead."

"Dead! Dupont dead! Did the Yankees get him?"

"No, he died of the fever. He arrived at Chittenden's in a dying condition and gave his dispatches to Grafton to bring on."

"Grafton? I think I have heard that name from Colonel Clay. Happy to meet you, Grafton. Let me hear the news from Missouri."

Much against his will Mark was forced to remain and again rehearse his story. When he told of the capture of the train and the defeat of Powell, Frost became very much excited.

"What Federal officer did you say was in command?" he asked.

"I didn't say, but I understood it was a Captain Middleton."

Frost sprang to his feet, letting out a volley of oaths.

"Where were you when this happened?" he then asked.

"I was absent from the valley. I was helping Mr. Chittenden in gathering supplies, and was away seeing about some that had not yet arrived."

Mark was now excused, but told to wait for Spencer. General Frost had taken him aside and they were engaged in earnest conversation. Every now and then they would glance at Mark, and he was sure they were talking about him. If he had heard what they were saying he would have known he was under suspicion.

"It can't be he," Frost was saying, "but every now and then there is something about him that makes me think of him. I hardly know what; certain motions, I think."

"I knew him well," answered Spencer, "and so far I have not seen anything that would make me think Grafton was he. I am to ride with him nearly a day's journey, and if I see anything suspicious—well you know what will happen."

All being ready the two rode away together. They had not gone far when Mark noticed that Spencer was watching every move he made. Instantly every nerve of Mark's body became alert, but to all appearances he was totally unsuspecting. To Spencer's request that he tell him something of his life, he responded that he did not have much to tell. He had been a member of a guerrilla band, was wounded and had found his way into the Ozarks, where he had been with Mr. Chittenden, who took him in when he was suffering with the fever. He had acted as courier for Colonel Clay, but had never met with many exciting adventures.

"Now, Spencer," he said, "tell me something of yourself, for I know you have faced a hundred dangers where I have faced one."

Spencer refused to be interviewed, and maintained a rather moody silence. At length they reached where they were to part and when they shook hands Spencer, as if by accident, drew the sleeve of his coat across Mark's face and his mustache came off.

"Damn you! I know you now," shrieked Spencer as he reached for his revolver, but quick as a flash Mark snatched a revolver from his bosom and fired.

Spencer's revolver went off half raised. He sank down in the saddle, then rolled from his horse, a motionless body.

Mark was about to dismount to see if he was dead when he was startled by the pounding of horses' hoofs and looking up saw a squad of Federal cavalry bearing down on him. Putting spurs to his horse and bending low over his neck he escaped amid a shower of bullets.

The only mark of the conflict that Mark could find was a bullet which had lodged in the back of his saddle.

After riding several miles, Mark met half a dozen guerrillas who said they were on their way to join Hindman. He told them of meeting the Yankee cavalry and that they would have to look out, and asked them to take a note to General Hindman for him. To this they readily assented and this is what Mark wrote:

GENERAL: I am sorry to say that just as Spencer and I were to part we ran into a squad of Yankee cavalry. Poor Spencer was killed and I only escaped by the fleetness of my horse. If Spencer had dispatches that will embarrass you, you can govern yourself accordingly, for they are now in the hands of the enemy.

As for the dispatches you entrusted to me, they are safe, and if they are never delivered you will know I have suffered the fate of poor Spencer.

MARK GRAFTON.

After parting from the guerrillas Mark, instead of riding towards home, turned his horse westward. In due time General Hindman learned that the dispatches he had entrusted to Mark had been faithfully delivered, but that Mark had disappeared. Mr. Chittenden looked for his return to the La Belle in vain.

General Hindman made anxious inquiries, for he had use for so faithful a courier as Mark had proved to be. But the weeks passed and nothing was heard, and it was thought he must have been killed, and he was numbered with the unknown dead.

Mr. Chittenden mourned him as such, but Grace maintained that he still lived, and she had good cause for her belief. She had never told her father of the love passage between Mark and herself, and how she had refused to bid him good-bye when he left. The memory of that parting was a secret, she felt, only to be held in her own heart, for she was not sure she would ever see or hear from Mark again.

One day a letter was placed in Grace's hands by a messenger who hurried away before she had time to thank him, much less question him. Much to her surprise and joy the letter was from Mark.

"He lives! He lives!" she cried rapturously as she pressed it to her lips. Grace had forgotten all her resentment towards Mark, forgotten that the secret that lay between them was still unsolved. She only knew that she loved him. Eagerly she read the letter, which ran:

GRACE: Lest you believe me dead, I write this. It was foolish in me to tell you of my love, but I had to do it. Now that you know, I am content. I ask nothing, deserve nothing, in return. Just the thought of loving you is like thinking of heaven. When I went away I rode as it were into the jaws of death, and escaped as by a miracle. Grace, it is best that I see you no more. Think of me only as one who takes joy in loving you. Only one thing will ever call me to your side, and that is if you are ever in grave danger. To defend you I would come from the ends of the earth.

I think you have read Longfellow's Hiawatha, for I have seen it in your library. Do you remember that when Minnehaha lay dying she called for Hiawatha, and, although he was miles and miles away, that cry of anguish reached him. And so great is my love for you that I believe that if you should call me in a time of danger I would hear. Remember this if trouble comes, though I hope it never will.

Farewell.

MARK.

Grace read and re-read the strange letter. Hiawatha had just been published when she was at school in St. Louis, and it had been a great favorite of hers.

What could Mark mean by intimating that some great peril might be impending? She knew not. But Mark lived; he still loved her, would always love her.

She placed the letter in her bosom next her heart and there it rested. Her secret was her own; why tell it? If Mark never came back, no one would ever know. But she believed he would come back, and her step grew lighter, her face brighter, her laugh merrier. In fact, she became her old self, and her father rejoiced, for he had noticed a change in her since Mark went away.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### PRAIRIE GROVE

When General Sterling Price was ordered east of the Mississippi River the Confederate Government placed the Department of Arkansas under the command of General T. C. Hindman. It was Hindman who originated the idea of organizing the guerrillas of Missouri into companies and regiments, intending by a general uprising to wrest the State from the grasp of the Federals.

In his report to the Confederate Government Hindman says: "I gave authority to various persons to raise companies and regiments there (in Missouri) and to operate as guerrillas."

Thus Hindman confesses he was encouraging the bloody guerrilla warfare which raged throughout the State.

Hindman ruled Arkansas with a rod of iron. He declared martial law throughout the State, appointed a provost marshal for every county, and proceeded to force every able-bodied man into the army. In his reports he coolly says: "For the salvation of the country, I took the responsibility to force these men into service. I now resolved for the same objects to compel them to remain."

A great many of these men were Union at heart, and desertions were frequent. To stop this Hindman began the wholesale shooting of deserters. In all probability he shot as many men for deserting as the Federal authorities shot guerrillas in Missouri for breaking their paroles. So high-handed did his acts become, and so many were the complaints made against him, that the Confederate Government had to take cognizance of them.

By the end of November Hindman had succeeded in gathering an army of from twenty-five to thirty thousand men. Many of them were unarmed, but he had a formidable host in comparison to the small army opposed to him.

It was on December the second that Lawrence arrived at the camp of General Blunt. Since he had crossed the mountains, and escaped the force in front of him, he had encountered no serious opposition. He had met and scattered two or three small bands of guerrillas, and taken a number of prisoners, whom he had been obliged to parole.

"I am more than glad to see you," exclaimed General Blunt, warmly grasping Lawrence's hand. "Schofield telegraphed me you were coming and I have been looking for you for several days. I began to fear misfortune had overtaken you."

"We did have a variety of adventures," answered Lawrence. "More than we bargained for, but we are here all right now."

"Tell us about it," said the General, and nothing would do but that Lawrence must give a detailed account of the trip. The General listened attentively, and when Lawrence finished he clapped him on the shoulder and cried, "Well done, my boy! Well done. You ought to be a general. But were not the warnings you received in the mountains rather mysterious?"

"They were," answered Lawrence, "and I have no plausible explanation to make."

Early next morning Blunt sent for Lawrence, asking him to come immediately. He found him sitting with a paper in his hand, and a puzzled expression on his face.

"Hello! Captain," he cried. "I'm glad to see you, as I am a little in the mystery business myself this morning."

"In the mystery business?" asked Lawrence, somewhat astonished.

"Yes, don't imagine you are the only one to receive mysterious warnings. I received one myself last night."

"Out with it. Don't keep me in suspense, General."

"Well, last night a soldier brought me a communication, saying it was given to him by a young Indian with the urgent request that it be given to me at once."

"You have Indians in your command, have you not?"

"Yes, a company of scouts under the command of Colonel Wattles. The paper was of such a nature that I immediately began an investigation as to its genuineness. Colonel Wattles asked every man in his command if any one of them had delivered such a paper and each and every one denied knowledge of it. I found the soldier who gave me the paper, and he said the Indian who gave it to him disappeared in the darkness before he could ask him any questions. The paper contains the most important information, if true. Here it is. I want you to look at it, and tell me what you think of it."

General Blunt handed Lawrence the communication, and no sooner had he glanced at it than he exclaimed, "Great Heavens!"

"What is it?" asked Blunt, jumping up in his excitement. "Do you know who wrote it?"

"I do not know who wrote it, but I know the handwriting. It is from the same person who warned General Schofield, through me, of the contemplated partisan uprising in Missouri last summer. It was the information given in that communication that enabled General Schofield to thwart the movement."

"Was it the same person that warned you that you were being pursued in the Ozarks?" asked the General.

"No, that warning was given by an illiterate person. This is by someone well educated. Whatever information the paper gives, act upon it at once. I will stake my life on its being correct."

"Read what it says," replied the General.

Lawrence read the paper through and, as he expected, it was a detailed account of the plans of General Hindman. It stated that Hindman had just received dispatches from several sources in Missouri that if he did not hurry up and invade the State the cause would be hopelessly lost, but if he could defeat Blunt and invade the State, thousands were ready to flock to his standard. Hindman had answered that he was ready to move on Blunt with twenty thousand men, and anticipated an easy victory as he (Blunt) did not have more than five or six thousand men.

"He estimated my force closely," said Blunt. "There must have been spies in my camp," but read on.

"Great Scott! He says Hindman will commence his movement on the fourth or fifth; and this is the third," exclaimed Lawrence.

"Yes, and I have only this small division to oppose him."

"Where are the other two divisions?"

"Up around Springfield, seventy-five miles away, and Schofield's orders are to hold this position at all hazards."

"Herron can get here," cried Lawrence. "I know his Western boys; they are greyhounds to

march."

"But just think, seventy-five miles in two or three days," said Blunt, "and then go into battle. But it is my only hope."

It was twelve miles to the telegraph office at Fayetteville. A swift courier carried the message there and from there it went on the wings of the lightning to General Herron.

It was a little after midnight on the morning of the fourth that General Herron received the message, and by three o'clock his little army was on the way—a march of seventy-five miles before them and then a battle. There was no lagging, no grumbling. "On to save Blunt" was the cry.

That army was accustomed to long marches, to hardships almost incredible. Hardly ever stopping, through the nights as well as days, they marched, and on the evening of the sixth the advance of Herron's army reached Fayetteville; the rest would be up during the night. Blunt's army was still twelve miles away, and the boom of the cannon told them the conflict was on.

Hindman knew that Herron was coming, and he made haste to strike before his arrival. On December fifth he instructed General Marmaduke to take his division, turn the right flank of Blunt's army, and throw his men in between Blunt and Fayetteville, thus preventing the union of Blunt and Herron.

The clash came at Cain Hill. Lawrence, with his troop, was in the advance, and the rapidity of their fire so astonished Marmaduke that he thought he was fighting a much larger force than he was, and his men fell back in confusion. The movement was a failure.

All through the next day Hindman's forces kept pouring through the passes of the mountains, and though the Federals resisted gallantly, they were gradually pressed back, and the evening of the sixth found the two armies confronting each other, ready to grapple in deadly conflict.

Blunt had sent word to Herron that he would fight where he was, and for him to hurry forward. During the night General Hindman made an unexpected and aggressive movement, worthy of Stonewall Jackson. Reasoning that Herron's men must be completely exhausted by their long march, he resolved to leave his camp fires burning and a small force which was to make a big show, thus leading General Blunt to believe the whole army was still before him. Hindman then marched around Blunt and in the morning was squarely between him and Herron. Hindman believed he could easily whip Herron before Blunt came up, and then he would turn on Blunt and finish the job.

As soon as it was light the Confederates in front of Blunt opened a noisy battle. Lawrence was serving on Blunt's staff, leaving the troop in command of Dan. The Federals pressed eagerly forward, the Confederates yielding ground readily.

"General," said Lawrence, "there is something wrong. I do not believe the whole army is before us. They give ground too easily. I believe the main part of Hindman's army has slipped past us, and gone to attack Herron."

"Impossible," answered Blunt. "The only road they could have taken to get past us is the Cove Creek road, some four miles away, and I sent Colonel Richardson with his regiment to guard that with strict orders to hold it, and let me know if he was attacked. I have heard nothing from him, so all must be well."

But Lawrence was not satisfied; more and more he became convinced that there was only a small force in front, and he asked Blunt if he might not go and try to find Richardson, as he had not yet reported. Permission was readily granted. Lawrence had not gone two miles before he came onto Richardson. He had not occupied nor had he attempted to occupy the Cove Creek road. Instead he had halted two miles from it, and sent forward a small reconnoitering party; and the officer in charge of the party had reported that the enemy had been passing along the road in force ever since midnight.

"Why didn't you occupy the road as ordered?" angrily demanded Lawrence of Richardson.

"Do you think I was going to fight the whole Confederate army with my little regiment? I'm not such a fool," retorted Richardson.

"Why didn't you send word to the General then that the enemy was passing along this road in force?" demanded Lawrence, still more angry. "By your own admission you became aware of the movement by midnight."

"Why, I was just about to report the matter," said Richardson.

"Just about to, and here it is after nine o'clock. If I had the power I would strip off your shoulder straps, and have you drummed out of the army," exclaimed Lawrence furiously. In fact, he came the nearest swearing he ever did. But there was no time to quarrel. Wheeling his horse he rode at full speed to General Blunt with the news.

Calling back his men and paying no more attention to the force in front, Blunt marched to the relief of Herron, but it was nearly eleven o'clock before he got under way. Then he did not know exactly where Herron was, for no courier could get through. It was one o'clock before the roar of the cannon told him that the battle had opened, and then he found he was marching in the wrong

direction, and it was nearly four o'clock before he reached the field.

Hindman's movement had been a complete success. Herron had gathered his little army at Fayetteville and early in the morning started to join Blunt, whose cannon he could hear, not dreaming that it was to be he and not Blunt that was to fight the main battle.

Hardly had the light of the short December day dawned when Shelby's brigade surprised and captured a train of thirty wagons, and with it nearly three hundred of the four hundred soldiers guarding it. Those not captured fled panic-stricken and for nearly five miles Shelby's men followed them, but here they ran into Herron's men and went back as fast as they had come.

Herron soon came upon the entire Confederate army in line of battle along Illinois Creek, not far from an old church called Prairie Grove Church. The position was a strong one, but Herron did not hesitate a moment, but made preparations to attack.

Why Hindman, with his overwhelming force, did not attack, but waited to be attacked, will never be known. Owing to the nature of the ground it took Herron some time to form his line, but at one o'clock the battle opened. For nearly three long hours it raged. Every time the Confederates essayed to charge they were met with such a storm of shot and shell that they went reeling back.

Twice did Herron's men make desperate charges and captured a battery each time, but they were met with such an overwhelming force that they were forced to relinquish the guns. Herron's men were hard pressed, but grimly they held to their position, awaiting the arrival of Blunt.

It was nearly four o'clock when the roar of Blunt's cannon was heard. Throwing his force on the flank of the Confederate army, they were compelled to give way and the field was won.

Darkness put an end to the conflict, and the tired soldiers threw themselves on the ground to sleep, expecting to renew the conflict in the morning. But Hindman had had enough. He had failed to crush Herron, and now that Blunt and Herron were united, he only thought of safety; so muffling the wheels of his artillery he began his retreat to Van Buren, leaving his dead to be buried and hundreds of his wounded to be cared for by the victorious Federals.

This ended all hopes of the Confederates invading Missouri at this time. Soon Hindman withdrew his army from Northwest Arkansas and fled to Little Rock.

Again had the Army of the Northwest, now known as the Army of the Frontier, achieved a glorious victory in the face of immense odds.<sup>[17]</sup>

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## CHAPTER XXV

### CALLED TO OTHER FIELDS

The victory of Prairie Grove sent a thrill throughout the west, especially to the Union men of Missouri. To the secession element of the State it was a fearful blow, and they felt that their only hope was in the success of the Southern army in other fields.

Generals Blunt and Herron and the gallant soldiers of the Army of the Frontier were warmly thanked by the Federal Government for the great victory they had achieved.

A few days after the battle an orderly placed a bulky letter in the hands of Lawrence. He found it to be from General Schofield. As he read it he uttered an exclamation of surprise. The letter stated that General Blair had sent an urgent request that Lawrence be at once returned to him, as he was greatly in need of a staff officer of Lawrence's acquirements.

"As much as I regret to lose you," wrote Schofield, "under the circumstances I cannot object. I have just heard of your achievements in the Ozarks and desire to thank you, which I hope to do in person."

The letter then went on to state that while he no longer feared an invasion of Missouri by any large force, the guerrilla warfare was by no means over, and the State was still open to raids from Arkansas; therefore he hoped that the troop would remain under the command of Lieutenant Sherman, and that the scout Harry Semans would remain with him.

As Lawrence read this his brow contracted, for he hated to give up Dan and Harry. But he felt the wisdom of Schofield's suggestion and could offer no objection.

Enclosed was a letter from General Blair to Lawrence, urging him to come as soon as possible, saying that the movement against Vicksburg was about to commence. "There will be stirring times down here for the next few months," he wrote, "and you will find plenty to do, and fresh fields in which to win honor."

After he read the letter Lawrence handed Schofield's letter to Dan, saying, "Read it."

Dan had read but a few words when he looked up with a happy smile. "Why, Captain," he exclaimed, "this is jolly. It means a wider field. I always thought I would like to be in an army commanded by Grant."

"Read on, Dan," said Lawrence. "There is much bitter with the sweet in that document."

Dan read on. In a moment he uttered an oath, and threw the letter down. "I won't stay," he cried. "I want to go with you. I will resign my commission. I will enlist as a private soldier so I can be near you."

"I do not think that will do you much good," said Lawrence, smiling. "As a private soldier you might be sent hundreds of miles from me. Even if we were in the same army we would see little or nothing of each other. Dan, let's look at this in a reasonable way. To part with you is as great a grief to me as to you. It will be a sad parting, Dan, but it will leave you in command of the troop and, Dan, I know you will do as well, if not better, than I. Then you will have Harry and Bruno. General Schofield is right; the guerrilla warfare is not over, and it is your duty to remain here."

It was hard to convince Dan, although he knew Lawrence was right.

"Let's go and see Blunt," said Lawrence.

The General, though he had known Lawrence but a few days, had become warmly attached to him. His gallantry and coolness in time of battle had won his admiration.

"I had hoped you could remain and become chief of my scouts," he said. "I have need of just such a body of men as you command."

"You forget," said Lawrence, "that General Schofield writes that the troop is to remain under the command of my lieutenant, Daniel Sherman. You will find him equal to all demands. As for scouting, Harry Semans is to remain with his dog Bruno, and they are equal to a regiment when it comes to scouting."

Schofield had written that he wished Lawrence would come by way of St. Louis, as he wished to see him. This meant a horseback ride of two hundred miles to Rolla. Lawrence's preparations for the long ride were soon made, and the time to bid farewell to his command came.

The members of the troop crowded around him to say good-bye and bid him Godspeed, and tears stood in the eyes of many a rough soldier as they took his hand in theirs.

When it came to parting with Dan and Harry, Lawrence broke down. He tried to say something, but a great lump was in his throat and his voice died away. They could only clasp hands, their eyes looking what their tongues refused to say. Dan and Harry watched him ride away, and as he looked back, waved him a last farewell.

But Lawrence's adventures in Missouri were not ended. He reached Springfield in safety and there joined a wagon train en route for Rolla, guarded by a detachment of fifty cavalry. The train was a small one, consisting of forty wagons and ten ambulances, the ambulances conveying back some disabled soldiers who had been furloughed.

The escort was in charge of a Captain Jackson, a pompous, red faced man. Lawrence noticed that he was more or less under the influence of liquor all the time, and that there was little discipline among his men.

A train from Rolla that came into Springfield just as this train was leaving reported that they had been threatened by a band of guerrillas under Jackman, but as their train was strongly guarded, he had not attacked.

"You had better be on your guard," said the officer in command to Jackson.

With an oath Jackson replied that his fifty men were a match for any force Jackman could bring against him. That he wished Jackman would attack, as he would like to give him a good licking.

The first day out Lawrence saw how things were going and spoke to Jackson, telling him that he was moving carelessly, that his men were straggling and were in no shape to resist an attack if one came.

Jackson drew himself proudly up and growled: "Who's in command of this train, you or I? If you are afraid you had better go back to Springfield and get a regiment to guard you through."

Lawrence smothered his wrath and said nothing more. Jackson went among his men boasting loudly how he had taken the starch out of that young peacock of a captain. He had quickly shown him he couldn't order him around.

Soon a lieutenant of the company came to Lawrence and said, "Captain, I heard what you said to Captain Jackson and his insulting reply. You are right. We are in no shape to resist an attack."

"You are in charge of the rear guard, are you not?" asked Lawrence.

"Yes."

"How many men have you?"

"Fifteen."

"Can they all be depended on?"

"Ten or twelve can."

"Good! Tell them if an attack comes to stand by the train to the last. Captain Jackson has charge of the advance; how many men has he?"

"Twenty. Half of them are no good. They would run at the first shot."

"That leaves fifteen men to guard the center of the train," replied Lawrence. "Under whose command are they?"

"Sergeant Strong. He's a good man."

"Let's see him."

The Sergeant was seen and found to be a keen young soldier, fully alive to the situation. "I have had hard work," he said, "to keep my men in hand owing to the example of those in front, but I am doing the best I can. One shot would stampede the whole advance."

"If an attack should come in front," said Lawrence, "and the advance come back panic-stricken, don't give way; Lieutenant Hale, here, will come to your relief. If the rear is attacked, go to him. If the center is attacked he will come to you."

"You can depend on that," said Hale.

"Are the teamsters armed?" asked Lawrence.

"Only about half of them are enlisted men. They are armed."

"See that their guns are loaded and ready for instant use."

The teamsters were astonished and considerably excited when the order came, but they were told that it was merely a matter of precaution, and that there was no cause for alarm.

On the morning of the third day out firing was heard in front. There came a volley followed by fiendish yells and the advance came tearing back, panic-stricken. In a moment everything was in confusion.

Down the train rode the guerrillas, shooting the teamsters and mules, and yelling like devils. Back came Captain Jackson, spurring his horse, his face white with fright.

"Halt," cried Lawrence. But the Captain went past him like a whirlwind, his only thought of escape.

Where the guerrillas had charged the head of the train the ground was open, but where Lawrence was there was a thick growth of bushes on one side of the road and a rough fence built out of logs and rails on the other.

Lawrence ordered one of the teamsters who had not entirely lost his head to swing his wagon across the road, blocking it. Sergeant Strong had succeeded in rallying some ten or twelve of the soldiers, who, springing from their horses, used the mules and wagons for breastworks. Several of the advance guard had been cut off, but they jumped from their horses and, diving under the wagon, continued their flight. Lawrence did not attempt to stop them, for they had lost their arms and would have been of no use.

Close on the heels of the fugitives came six or eight guerrillas.

"Steady, men! Hold your fire!" shouted Lawrence.

He waited until the guerrillas were within a few rods of the improvised breastworks, then ordered the men to fire. Half the saddles were emptied and the rest went scurrying back. But they were met by the main body of guerrillas and all came charging with blood curdling yells.

At this opportune moment Lieutenant Hale came galloping up with the rear guard. His quick eye took in the situation and he ordered his men to dismount and take position behind the mules and wagons.

"Hold your fire!" again shouted Lawrence. "Keep cool and take good aim."

On came the yelling horde. When within a few yards of the blockade the foremost tried to check their horses, but those in the rear pressed on and threw the whole body into confusion.

"Fire!" Lawrence's voice rang out loud and clear. In that packed mass the effect of the volley was terrible.

"Give it to them," shouted Lawrence.

The men loaded and fired as fast as they could, but soon there was no one to shoot at. The guerrillas who had escaped were in retreat.

"Lieutenant Hale, hold the position here," said Lawrence. "Fifteen men come with me."

Every man within the barricade volunteered. Quickly Lawrence counted off fifteen. "The rest stay with Lieutenant Hale and hold the barricade," he ordered.

With the fifteen men Lawrence boldly charged after the fleeing enemy. They had commenced to rally, but a few well directed volleys once more put them to flight.

Ten or twelve wagons were in flames, half a dozen of the teamsters lay weltering in their blood, and the poor mules lay in heaps as they had fallen. The ambulances had been in the rear of the train and so the occupants had escaped.

It was found that fifteen of the teamsters and soldiers had been killed or wounded. Of the guerrillas, thirty lay dead or desperately wounded.

After the fight was over Captain Jackson came creeping back. He claimed that before he retreated he had killed two of the guerrillas with his own hand and he had only gone to the rear to order up Lieutenant Hale.

"Captain Jackson, you are under arrest."

"Sergeant Strong, please relieve Captain Jackson of his sword," said Lawrence, coolly.

"By what right do you arrest me?" roared the Captain. "I refuse to be arrested. Sergeant Strong, dare to arrest me and I will have you court-martialed."

"As the representative of General Schofield I arrest you; I am on his staff," quietly answered Lawrence. "Sergeant, do your duty."

The Captain delivered up his sword without a word. The name of General Schofield was potent.

Lawrence now turned to Lieutenant Hale and said, "Lieutenant, you are in charge of the train. Clear up the debris of the battle. Let the men in the ambulances who are best able be put in the wagons and our wounded take their places. Let the wounded guerrillas be taken to that house over there, and be made as comfortable as possible. Their friends will care for them as soon as we are out of sight."

It was noon before the train was again on the way. The burnt wagons, dead mules and new made graves were the mute witnesses left to tell of the fight.

Rolla was reached without further trouble. Here Lawrence turned Captain Jackson over, charging him with disgraceful cowardice. The Captain was court-martialed and dishonorably dismissed from the service. For their bravery, Lieutenant Hale was promoted to captain and Sergeant Strong to second lieutenant.

Lawrence took the cars at Rolla and was soon in St. Louis, where he reported to General Schofield. What that gentleman said brought the blushes to Lawrence's cheeks.

"You do not know how I hate to give you up," said the General. "But on your account, I rejoice. This is a miserable warfare in Missouri; not much glory gained in fighting guerrillas. I will welcome the day when I am assigned to another department. I have repeatedly asked to be released, but the powers that be think I am of more service here. I know the Radicals are opposed to me, and that complaints are pouring into Washington against me. There is a large element that will not be satisfied except I devastate the whole State with fire and sword."

"I know," replied Lawrence. "I had a little experience with Jennison. Jim Lane and a host of others are as bad. As you say, this is a murderous warfare in Missouri, without much glory."

"There will be great things doing around Vicksburg. I envy you," said Schofield.

"Ah! General, before the war is over you may have opportunities to distinguish yourself, rather than fight guerrillas."

The history of General Schofield shows that these opportunities came and that in the last year of the war he won great distinction.

Lawrence made a hurried visit to his friends before he departed for his new field. He found his uncle and aunt well. His uncle was as firmly convinced as ever that the South could never be conquered.

Lola Laselle was overjoyed to meet him. "Every day I live I am prouder of my knight-errant than ever," she cried. "No lady of old ever had a braver or truer knight."

Lawrence found Leon Laselle had nearly recovered from his wound. Randolph Hamilton was in a fair way to recover, and was longing for the day to come when he could be exchanged and again fight for the principles he held dear.

When he heard of Lawrence being the chosen knight of Lola he begged to be allowed to become her knight too. "Then Lola," he said, "you will have a knight in both armies, and one of them will be sure to come back wearing the crown of victory."

"It will not do," laughed Lola, "and you are a naughty boy for fighting against the old flag. I had rather my knight be defeated in a good cause than be victor in a bad one, and Randolph, the cause for which you are fighting is a bad one, very bad."

Randolph sighed. Day by day Lola had become more precious to him, and as he looked at Lawrence he thought, "Why should she not prefer him to me?"

When Lawrence inquired so particularly about Dorothy, how she was getting along and how she liked Europe, a faint hope came to him that after all it might be Dorothy and not Lola that attracted Lawrence; and then he sighed again, for he remembered Dorothy's hatred for Yankees.



The next day Lawrence was floating down the river. When we meet him next it will be in that great campaign which ended in the capture of Vicksburg, the Gibraltar of the Mississippi River.

## THE END.

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- [1] A true incident.
- [2] A true incident of the battle.
- [3] This prisoner and fifteen others were afterwards executed by McNeil for the breaking of their paroles.
- [4] Colonel McNeil reports his loss in this action as twenty-eight killed and sixty wounded. He estimates the loss of the guerrillas as one hundred and fifty killed, three hundred wounded and forty-seven prisoners. Horses captured, one hundred and fifty.
- [5] The brave Major recovered from what was supposed to be a mortal wound, was exchanged, and afterwards did valiant service for the Union.
- [6] Out of the seven hundred and forty Federals engaged in the battle the loss was two hundred and seventy-two. The Confederates never reported their loss, but a Confederate officer told Captain Brawner that they buried one hundred and eighteen, who had been killed outright, besides their hundreds of wounded.
- [7] See "With Lyon in Missouri."
- [8] Several months after this Lamar was captured, not by Lawrence, but by an officer who knew the story. He was paroled and lived to become a good citizen after the war.
- [9] Colonel Ellet died of his wounds.
- [10] A few weeks after this battle Rosecrans was appointed Commander of the Army of the Cumberland.
- [11] It is claimed by friends of Porter that he also paroled Allsman, and that he had nothing to do with his disappearance.
- [12] All of these men named by Strachan had been cruelly murdered by guerrillas.
- [13] It was currently reported at the time, and believed for years, that young Smith voluntarily offered himself as a substitute for Humphrey; and that McNeil accepted him as such, and had him shot, after his performing an act that would have placed him among the world's greatest heroes.

This is what the author believed until in writing this book he wrote to Palmyra for the full facts in the case, which were furnished him by Mr. Frank H. Sosey, editor of the Palmyra Spectator.

No doubt this belief had much to do in intensifying the feeling against General McNeil.

- [14] The Palmyra incident has gone into history as one of the most deplorable during the war. Even at this late day it is more often referred to than the horrible massacres committed by Anderson and Quantrell.

That General McNeil did not violate the rules of civilized warfare will be generally admitted, also that his provocation was great. But the incident always hung over him like a cloud, and was the means of defeating him for several responsible official positions. The dark blot against McNeil was that he did not bring Strachan to account for disobeying his orders, and that he took no notice of the awful crime of which Strachan was accused in connection with this affair.

As for Strachan, his acts showed him to be a brute, and in connection with this affair a crime was charged against him for which he should have been court-martialed and shot. He was court-martialed a year or two afterwards, but not for the Palmyra affair, and sentenced to a year in military prison, but never served his sentence, as he was pardoned by General Rosecrans. He died in 1866, unwept and unmourned.

- [15] Jerry called his wife Agnes only when they were alone. At other times she was known as Billy and called so by his men.
- [16] This wound prevented Big Tom for some months from carrying out his contemplated revenge against the Chittendens.
- [17] The battle of Prairie Grove, for the number engaged, was a bloodier and more fiercely contested battle than Pea Ridge. Blunt claimed that he and Herron together had only seven thousand men on the field. That Herron, with not more than half that number, had held the enemy at bay for three hours, speaks volumes for the valor of his weary men.

Hindman claims he brought only eleven thousand men to the fight.

The Federal loss was about thirteen hundred; the Confederate loss was estimated at from fifteen hundred to two thousand. Hindman admitted a loss of fourteen hundred.

A few of the Federal regiments engaged lost heavily. The Twentieth Wisconsin lost two hundred and seventeen; the Twenty-sixth Indiana, two hundred and one; the Nineteenth Iowa, one hundred and ninety-three; the Seventh Missouri Cavalry, one hundred and forty-two, and the Thirty-seventh Illinois, seventy-one.

General John C. Black, then colonel of the Thirty-seventh Illinois, states that his regiment

marched sixty-six miles in thirty-six hours to get into the fight, and so exhausted were the men that during lulls in the battle they would sink to the ground and be fast asleep in a minute, but would spring to their feet and renew the fight when the call came, with all the fury of fresh soldiers.

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