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THE CRISIS

By Winston Churchill

Volume 2.

CHAPTER VIII

BELLEGARDE

Miss Virginia Carvel came down the steps in her riding-habit. And Ned, who had been waiting in the street with the horses, obsequiously held his hand while his young mistress leaped into Vixen's saddle. Leaving the darkey to follow upon black Calhoun, she cantered off up the street, greatly to the admiration of the neighbor. They threw open their windows to wave at her, but Virginia pressed her lips and stared straight ahead. She was going out to see the Russell girls at their father's country place on Bellefontaine Road, especially to proclaim her detestation for a certain young Yankee upstart. She had unbosomed herself to Anne Brinsmade and timid Eugenie Renault the day before.

It was Indian summer, the gold and purple season of the year. Frost had come and gone. Wasps were buzzing confusedly about the eaves again, marvelling at the balmy air, and the two Misses Russell, Puss and Emily, were seated within the wide doorway at needlework when Virginia dismounted at the horseblock.

"Oh, Jinny, I'm so glad to see you," said Miss Russell. "Here's Elise Saint Simon from New Orleans. You must stay all day and to-night."

"I can't, Puss," said Virginia, submitting impatiently to Miss Russell's warm embrace. She was

disappointed at finding the stranger. "I only came —to say that I am going to have a birthday party in a few weeks. You must be sure to come, and bring your guest."

Virginia took her bridle from Ned, and Miss Russell's hospitable face fell.

"You're not going?" she said.

"To Bellegarde for dinner," answered Virginia.

"But it's only ten o'clock," said Puss. "And, Jinny?"

"Yes."

"There's a new young man in town, and they do say his appearance is very striking—not exactly handsome, you know, but strong-looking."

"He's horrid!" said Virginia. "He's a Yankee."

"How do you know?" demanded Puss and Emily in chorus.

"And he's no gentleman," said Virginia.

"But how do you know, Jinny?"

"He's an upstart."

"Oh. But he belongs to a very good Boston family, they say."

"There are no good Boston families," replied Virginia, with conviction, as she separated her reins. "He has proved that. Who ever heard of a good Yankee family?"

"What has he done to you, Virginia?" asked Puss, who had brains.

Virginia glanced at the guest. But her grievance was too hot within her for suppression.

Do you remember Mr. Benbow's Hester, girls? The one I always said I wanted. She was sold at auction yesterday. Pa and I were passing the Court House, with Clarence, when she was put up for sale. We crossed the street to see what was going on, and there was your strong-looking Yankee standing at the edge of the crowd. I am quite sure that he saw me as plainly as I see you, Puss Russell."

"How could he help it?" said Puss, slyly.

Virginia took no notice of the remark.

"He heard me ask Pa to buy her. He heard Clarence say that he would bid her in for me. I know he did. And yet he goes in and outbids Clarence, and buys her himself. Do you think any gentleman would do that, Puss Russell?"

"He bought her himself!" cried the astonished Miss Russell. "Why I thought that all Bostonians were Abolitionists."

"Then he set her free," said Miss Carvel, contemptuously Judge Whipple went on her bond to-day."

"Oh, I'm just crazy to see him now," said Miss Russell.

"Ask him to your party, Virginia," she added mischievously.

"Do you think I would have him in my house?" cried Virginia.

Miss Russell was likewise courageous—"I don't see why not. You have Judge Whipple every Sunday dinner, and he's an Abolitionist."

Virginia drew herself up.

"Judge Whipple has never insulted me," she said, with dignity.

Puss gave way to laughter. Whereupon, despite her protests and prayers for forgiveness, Virginia took to her mare again and galloped off. They saw her turn northward on the Bellefontaine Road.

Presently the woodland hid from her sight the noble river shining far below, and Virginia pulled Vixen between the gateposts which marked the entrance to her aunt's place, Bellegarde. Half a mile through the cool forest, the black dirt of the driveway flying from Vixen's hoofs, and there was the Colfax house

on the edge of the, gentle slope; and beyond it the orchard, and the blue grapes withering on the vines, —and beyond that fields and fields of yellow stubble. The silver smoke of a steamboat hung in wisps above the water. A young negro was busily washing the broad veranda, but he stopped and straightened at sight of the young horsewoman.

"Sambo, where's your mistress?"

"Clar t' goodness, Miss Jinny, she was heah leetle while ago."

"Yo' git atter Miss Lilly, yo' good-fo'-nuthin' niggah," said Ned, warmly. "Ain't yo' be'n raised better'n to stan' theh wif yo'mouf open?"

Sambo was taking the hint, when Miss Virginia called him back.

"Where's Mr. Clarence?"

"Young Masr? I'll fotch him, Miss Jinny. He jes come home f'um seein' that thar trottin' hose he's gwine to race nex' week."

Ned, who had tied Calhoun and was holding his mistress's bridle, sniffed. He had been Colonel Carvel's jockey in his younger days.

"Shucks!" he said contemptuously. "I hoped to die befo' the day a gemman'd own er trottah, Jinny. On'y runnin' hosses is fit fo' gemmen."

"Ned," said Virginia, "I shall be eighteen in two weeks and a young lady. On that day you must call me Miss Jinny."

Ned's face showed both astonishment and inquiry.

"Jinny, ain't I nussed you always? Ain't I come upstairs to quiet you when yo' mammy ain't had no power ovah yo'? Ain't I cooked fo' yo', and ain't I followed you everywheres since I quit ridin' yo' pa's bosses to vict'ry? Ain't I one of de fambly? An' yit yo' ax me to call yo' Miss Jinny?"

"Then you've had privileges enough," Virginia answered. "One week from to-morrow you are to say 'Miss Jinny.'"

"I'se tell you what, Jinny," he answered mischievously, with an emphasis on the word, "I'se call you Miss Jinny ef you'll call me Mistah Johnson. Mistah Johnson. You aint gwinter forget? Mistah Johnson."

"I'll remember," she said. "Ned," she demanded suddenly, "would you like to be free?"

The negro started.

"Why you ax me dat, Jinny?"

"Mr. Benbow's Hester is free," she said.

"Who done freed her?"

Miss Virginia flushed. "A detestable young Yankee, who has come out here to meddle with what doesn't concern him. I wanted Hester, Ned. And you should have married her, if you behaved yourself."

Ned laughed uneasily.

"I reckon I'se too ol' fo' Heste'." And added with privileged impudence, "There ain't no cause why I can't marry her now."

Virginia suddenly leaped to the ground without his assistance.

"That's enough, Ned," she said, and started toward the house.

"Jinny! Miss Jinny!" The call was plaintive.

"Well, what?"

"Miss Jinny, I seed that than young gemman. Lan' sakes, he ain' look like er Yankee."

"Ned," said Virginia, sternly, "do you want to go back to cooking?"

He quailed. "Oh, no'm—Lan' sakes, no'm. I didn't mean nuthin'."

She turned, frowned, and bit her lip. Around the corner of the veranda she ran into her cousin. He, too, was booted and spurred. He reached out, boyishly, to catch her in his arms. But she drew back from his grasp.

"Why, Jinny," he cried, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing, Max." She often called him so, his middle name being Maxwell.
"But you have no right to do that."

"To do what?" said Clarence, making a face.

"You know," answered Virginia, curtly. "Where's Aunt Lillian?"

"Why haven't I the right?" he asked, ignoring the inquiry.

"Because you have not, unless I choose. And I don't choose."

"Are you angry with me still? It wasn't my fault. Uncle Comyn made me come away. You should have had the girl, Jinny, if it took my fortune."

"You have been drinking this morning, Max," said Virginia.

"Only a julep or so," he replied apologetically. "I rode over to the race track to see the new trotter. I've called him Halcyon, Jinny," he continued, with enthusiasm. "And he'll win the handicap sure."

She sat down on the veranda steps, with her knees crossed and her chin resting on her hands. The air was heavy with the perfume of the grapes and the smell of late flowers from the sunken garden near by. A blue haze hung over the Illinois shore.

"Max, you promised me you wouldn't drink so much."

"And I haven't been, Jinny, 'pon my word," he replied. "But I met old Sparks at the Tavern, and he started to talk about the horses, and—and he insisted."

"And you hadn't the strength of character," she said, scornfully, "to refuse."

"Pshaw, Jinny, a gentleman must be a gentleman. I'm no Yankee."

For a space Virginia answered nothing. Then she said, without changing her position:

"If you were, you might be worth something."

"Virginia!"

She did not reply, but sat gazing toward the water. He began to pace the veranda, fiercely.

"Look here, Jinny," he cried, pausing in front of her. "There are some things you can't say to me, even in jest."

Virginia rose, flicked her riding-whip, and started down the steps.

"Don't be a fool, Max," she said.

He followed her, bewildered. She skirted the garden, passed the orchard, and finally reached a summer house perched on a knoll at the edge of the wood. Then she seated herself on a bench, silently. He took a place on the opposite side, with his feet stretched out, dejectedly.

"I'm tired trying to please you," he said. "I have been a fool. You don't care that for me. It was all right when I was younger, when there was no one else to take you riding, and jump off the barn for your amusement, Miss. Now you have Tom Catherwood and Jack Brinsmade and the Russell boys running after you, it's different. I reckon I'll go to Kansas. There are Yankees to shoot in Kansas."

He did not see her smile as he sat staring at his feet.

"Max," said she, all at once, "why don't you settle down to something? Why don't you work?"

Young Mr. Colfax's arm swept around in a circle.

"There are twelve hundred acres to look after here, and a few niggers. That's enough for a gentleman."

"Pooh!" exclaimed his cousin, "this isn't a cotton plantation. Aunt Lillian doesn't farm for money. If she did, you would have to check your extravagances mighty quick, sir."

"I look after Pompey's reports, I do as much work as my ancestors," answered Clarence, hotly.

"Ah, that is the trouble," said Virginia.

"What do you mean?" her cousin demanded.

"We have been gentlemen too long," said Virginia.

The boy straightened up and rose. The pride and wilfulness of generations was indeed in his handsome face. And something else went with it. Around the mouth a grave tinge of indulgence.

"What has your life been?" she went on, speaking rapidly. "A mixture of gamecocks and ponies and race horses and billiards, and idleness at the Virginia Springs, and fighting with other boys. What do you know? You wouldn't go to college. You wouldn't study law. You can't write a decent letter. You don't know anything about the history of your country. What can you do—?"

"I can ride and fight," he said. "I can go to New Orleans to-morrow to join Walker's Nicaragua expedition. We've got to beat the Yankees, —they'll have Kansas away from us before we know it."

Virginia's eye flashed appreciation.

"Do you remember, Jinny," he cried, "one day long ago when those Dutch ruffians were teasing you and Anne on the road, and Bert Russell and Jack and I came along? We whipped 'em, Jinny. And my eye was closed. And you were bathing it here, and one of my buttons was gone. And you counted the rest."

"Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief, doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief," she recited, laughing. She crossed over and sat beside him, and her tone changed. "Max, can't you understand? It isn't that. Max, if you would only work at something. That is why the Yankees beat us. If you would learn to weld iron, or to build bridges, or railroads. Or if you would learn business, and go to work in Pa's store."

"You do not care for me as I am?"

"I knew that you did not understand," she answered passionately. "It is because I care for you that I wish to make you great. You care too much for a good time, for horses, Max. You love the South, but you think too little how she is to be saved. If war is to come, we shall want men like that Captain Robert Lee who was here. A man who can turn the forces of the earth to his own purposes."

For a moment Clarence was moodily silent.

"I have always intended to go into politics, after Pa's example," he said at length.

"Then—" began Virginia, and paused.

"Then—?" he said.

"Then—you must study law."

He gave her the one keen look. And she met it, with her lips tightly pressed together. Then he smiled.

"Virginia, you will never forgive that Yankee, Brice."

"I shall never forgive any Yankee," she retorted quickly. "But we are not talking about him. I am thinking of the South, and of you."

He stooped toward her face, but she avoided him and went back to the bench.

"Why not?" he said.

"You must prove first that you are a man," she said.

For years he remembered the scene. The vineyard, the yellow stubble; and the river rushing on and on with tranquil power, and the slow panting of the steamboat. A doe ran out of the forest, and paused, her head raised, not twenty feet away.

"And then you will marry me, Jinny?" he asked finally.

"Before you may hope to control another, we shall see whether you can control yourself, sir."

"But it has all been arranged," he exclaimed, "since we played here together years ago!"

"No one shall arrange that for me," replied Virginia promptly. "And I should think that you would wish to have some of the credit for yourself."

"Jinny!"

Again she avoided him by leaping the low railing. The doe fled into the forest, whistling fearfully. Virginia waved her hand to him and started toward the house. At the corner of the porch she ran into her aunt Mrs. Colfax was a beautiful woman. Beautiful when Addison Colfax married her in Kentucky at nineteen, beautiful still at three and forty. This, I am aware, is a bald statement. "Prove it," you say. "We do not believe it. It was told you by some old beau who lives upon the memory of the past."

Ladies, a score of different daguerrotypes of Lillian Colfax are in existence. And whatever may be said of portraits, daguerrotypes do not flatter. All the town admitted that she was beautiful. All the town knew that she was the daughter of old Judge Colfax's overseer at Halcyondale. If she had not been beautiful, Addison Colfax would not have run away with her. That is certain. He left her a rich widow at five and twenty, mistress of the country place he had bought on the Bellefontaine Road, near St. Louis. And when Mrs. Colfax was not dancing off to the Virginia watering-places, Bellegarde was a gay house.

"Jinny," exclaimed her aunt, "how you scared me! What on earth is the matter?"

"Nothing," said Virginia

"She refused to kiss me," put in Clarence, half in play, half in resentment.

Mrs. Colfax laughed musically. She put one of her white hands on each of her niece's cheeks, kissed her, and then gazed into her face until Virginia reddened.

"Law, Jinny, you're quite pretty," said her aunt

"I hadn't realized it—but you must take care of your complexion. You're horribly sunburned, and you let your hair blow all over your face. It's barbarous not to wear a mask when you ride. Your Pa doesn't look after you properly. I would ask you to stay to the dance to-night if your skin were only white, instead of red. You're old enough to know better, Virginia. Mr. Vance was to have driven out for dinner. Have you seen him, Clarence?"

"No, mother."

"He is so amusing," Mrs. Colfax continued, "and he generally brings candy. I shall die of the blues before supper." She sat down with a grand air at the head of the table, while Alfred took the lid from the silver soup-tureen in front of her. "Jinny, can't you say something bright? Do I have to listen to Clarence's horse talk for another hour? Tell me some gossip. Will you have some gumbo soup?"

"Why do you listen to Clarence's horse talk?" said Virginia. "Why don't you make him go to work!"

"Mercy!" said Mrs. Colfax, laughing, "what could he do?"

"That's just it," said Virginia. "He hasn't a serious interest in life."

Clarence looked sullen. And his mother, as usual, took his side.

"What put that into your head, Jinny," she said. "He has the place here to look after, a very gentlemanly occupation. That's what they do in Virginia."

"Yes," said Virginia, scornfully, "we're all gentlemen in the South. What do we know about business and developing the resources of the country? Not THAT."

"You make my head ache, my dear," was her aunt's reply. "Where did you get all this?"

"You ask me because I am a girl," said Virginia. "You believe that women were made to look at, and to play with,—not to think. But if we are going to get ahead of the Yankees, we shall have to think. It was all very well to be a gentleman in the days of my great-grandfather. But now we have railroads and steamboats. And who builds them? The Yankees. We of the South think of our ancestors, and drift deeper and deeper into debt. We know how to fight, and we know how to command. But we have been ruined by—" here she glanced at the retreating form of Alfred, and lowered her voice, "by niggers."

Mrs. Colfax's gaze rested languidly on her niece's faces which glowed with indignation.

"You get this terrible habit of argument from Comyn," she said. "He ought to send you to boarding-school. How mean of Mr. Vance not to come! You've been talking with that old reprobate Whipple. Why does Comyn put up with him?"

"He isn't an old reprobate," said Virginia, warmly.

"You really ought to go to school," said her aunt. "Don't be eccentric. It isn't fashionable. I suppose you wish Clarence to go into a factory."

"If I were a man," said Virginia, "and going into a factory would teach me how to make a locomotive or a cotton press, or to build a bridge, I should go into a factory. We shall never beat the Yankees until we meet them on their own ground."

"There is Mr. Vance now," said Mrs. Colfax, and added fervently, "Thank the Lord!"

CHAPTER IX

A QUIET SUNDAY IN LOCUST STREET

IF the truth were known where Virginia got the opinions which she expressed so freely to her aunt and cousin, it was from Colonel Carvel himself. The Colonel would rather have denounced the Dred Scott decision than admit to Judge Whipple that one of the greatest weaknesses of the South lay in her lack of mechanical and manufacturing ability. But he had confessed as much in private to Captain Elijah Brent. The Colonel would often sit for an hour or more, after supper, with his feet tucked up on the mantel and his hat on the back of his head, buried in thought. Then he would saunter slowly down to the Planters' House bar, which served the purposes of a club in those days, in search of an argument with other prominent citizens. The Colonel had his own particular chair in his own particular corner, which was always vacated when he came in at the door. And then he always had three fingers of the best Bourbon whiskey, no more and no less, every evening.

He never met his bosom friend and pet antagonist at the Planters' House bar. Judge Whipple, indeed, took his meals upstairs, but he never descended,—it was generally supposed because of the strong slavery atmosphere there. However, the Judge went periodically to his friend's for a quiet Sunday dinner (so called in derision by St. Louisans), on which occasions Virginia sat at the end of the table and endeavored to pour water on the flames when they flared up too fiercely.

The Sunday following her ride to Bellegarde was the Judge's Sunday, Certain tastes which she had inherited had hitherto provided her with pleasurable sensations while these battles were in progress. More than once had she scored a fair hit on the Judge for her father,—to the mutual delight of both gentlemen. But to-day she dreaded being present at the argument. Just why she dreaded it is a matter of feminine psychology best left to the reader for solution.

The argument began, as usual, with the tearing apart limb by limb of the unfortunate Franklin Pierce, by Judge Whipple.

"What a miserable exhibition in the eyes of the world," said the Judge. "Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire" (he pronounced this name with infinite scorn) "managed by Jefferson Davis of Mississippi!"

"And he was well managed, sir," said the Colonel.

"What a pliant tool of your Southern slaveholders! I hear that you are to give him a plantation as a reward."

"No such thing, sir."

"He deserves it," continued the Judge, with conviction. "See the magnificent forts he permitted Davis to build up in the South, the arsenals he let him stock. The country does not realize this. But the day will, come when they will execrate Pierce before Benedict Arnold, sir. And look at the infamous Kansas-Nebraska act! That is the greatest crime, and Douglas and Pierce the greatest criminals, of the century."

"Do have some more of that fried chicken, Judge," said Virginia.

Mr. Whipple helped himself fiercely, and the Colonel smiled.

"You should be satisfied now," said he. "Another Northern man is in the White House."

"Buchanan!" roared the Judge, with his mouth full.

"Another traitor, sir. Another traitor worse than the first. He swallows the Dred Scott decision, and smirks. What a blot on the history of this Republic! O Lord!" cried Mr. Whipple, "what are we coming to? A Northern man, he could gag and bind Kansas and force her into slavery against the will of her citizens. He packs his Cabinet to support the ruffians you send over the borders. The very governors he ships out there, his henchmen, have their stomachs turned. Look at Walker, whom they are plotting against in Washington. He can't stand the smell of this Lecompton Constitution Buchanan is trying to jam down their throats. Jefferson Davis would have troops there, to be sure that it goes through, if he had his way. Can't you see how one sin leads to another, Carvel? How slavery is rapidly demoralizing a free people?"

"It is because you won't let it alone where it belongs, sir," retorted the Colonel. It was seldom that he showed any heat in his replies. He talked slowly, and he had a way of stretching forth his hand to prevent the more eager Judge from interrupting him.

"The welfare of the whole South, as matters now stand, sir, depends upon slavery. Our plantations could not exist a day without slave labor. If you abolished that institution, Judge Whipple, you would ruin millions of your fellow-countrymen,—you would reduce sovereign states to a situation of disgraceful dependence. And all, sir," now he raised his voice lest the Judge break in, "all, sir, for the sake of a low breed that ain't fit for freedom. You and I, who have the Magna Charta and the Declaration of Independence behind us, who are descended from a race that has done nothing but rule for ten centuries and more, may well establish a Republic where the basis of stability is the self-control of the individual—as long as men such as you and I form its citizens. Look at the South Americans. How do Republics go there? And the minute you and I let in niggers, who haven't any more self-control than dogs, on an equal basis, with as much of a vote as you have,—niggers, sir, that have lived like wild beasts in the depths of the jungle since the days of Ham, —what's going to become of our Republic?"

"Education," cried the Judge.

But the word was snatched out of his mouth.

"Education isn't a matter of one generation. No, sir, nor two, nor three, nor four. But of centuries."

"Sir," said the Judge, "I can point out negroes of intelligence and learning."

"And I reckon you could teach some monkeys to talk English, and recite the catechism, and sing emotional hymns, if you brought over a couple of million from Africa," answered the Colonel, dryly, as he rose to put on his hat and light a cigar.

It was his custom to offer a cigar to the Judge, who invariably refused, and rubbed his nose with scornful violence.

Virginia, on the verge of leaving, stayed on, fascinated by the turn the argument had taken.

"Your prejudice is hide-bound, sir," said Mr. Whipple.

"No, Whipple," said the Colonel, "when God washed off this wicked earth, and started new, He saw fit to put the sons of Ham in subjection. They're slaves of each other in Africa, and I reckon they're treated no better than they are here. Abuses can't be helped in any system, sir, though we are bettering them. Were the poor in London in the days of the Edwards as well off as our niggers are to-day?"

The Judge snorted.

"A divine institution!" he shouted. "A black curse! Because the world has been a wicked place of oppression since Noah's day, is that any reason why it should so continue until the day of Judgment?"

The Colonel smiled, which was a sign that he was pleased with his argument.

"Now, see here, Whipple," said he. "If we had any guarantee that you would let us alone where we are, to manage our slaves and to cultivate our plantations, there wouldn't be any trouble. But the country keeps on growing and growing, and you're not content with half. You want everything,—all the new states must abolish slavery. And after a while you will overwhelm us, and ruin us, and make us paupers. Do you wonder that we contend for our rights, tooth and nail? They are our rights."

"If it had not been for Virginia and Maryland and the South, this nation would not be in existence."

The Colonel laughed.

"First rate, Jinny," he cried. "That's so."

But the Judge was in a reverie. He probably had not heard her.

"The nation is going to the dogs," he said, mumbling rather to himself than to the others. "We shall never prosper until the curse is shaken off, or wiped out in blood. It clogs our progress. Our merchant marine, of which we were so proud, has been annihilated by these continued disturbances. But, sir," he cried, hammering his fist upon the table until the glasses rang, "the party that is to save us was born at Pittsburgh last year on Washington's birthday. The Republican Party, sir."

"Shucks!" exclaimed Mr. Carvel, with amusement, "The Black Republican Party, made up of old fools and young Anarchists, of Dutchmen and nigger-worshippers. Why, Whipple, that party's a joke. Where's your leader?"

"In Illinois," was the quick response.

"What's his name?"

"Abraham Lincoln, sir," thundered Mr. Whipple. "And to my way of thinking he has uttered a more significant phrase on the situation than any of your Washington statesmen. 'This government,' said he to a friend of mine, 'cannot exist half slave and half free.'"

So impressively did Mr. Whipple pronounce these words that Mr. Carvel stirred uneasily, and in spite of himself, as though he were listening to an oracle. He recovered instantly.

"He's a demagogue, seeking for striking phrases, sir. You're too intelligent a man to be taken in by such as he."

"I tell you he is not, sir."

"I know him, sir," cried the Colonel, taking down his feet. "He's an obscure lawyer. Poor white trash! Torn down poor! My friend Mr. Richardson of Springfield tells me he is low down. He was born in a log cabin, and spends most of his time in a drug-store telling stories that you would not listen to, Judge Whipple."

"I would listen to anything he said," replied the Judge. "Poor white trash, sir! The greatest men rise from the people. A demagogue!" Mr. Whipple fairly shook with rage. "The nation doesn't know him yet. But mark my words, the day will come when it will. He was balloted for Vice-President in the Philadelphia convention last year. Nobody paid any attention to that. If the convention had heard him speak at Bloomington, he would have been nominated instead of Fremont. If the nation could have heard him, he would be President to-day instead of that miserable Buchanan. I happened to be at Bloomington. And while the idiots on the platform were drivelling, the people kept calling for Lincoln. I had never heard of him then. I've never forgot him since. He came ambling out of the back of the hall, a lanky, gawky looking man, ridiculously ugly, sir. But the moment he opened his mouth he had us spellbound. The language which your low-down lawyer used was that of a God-sent prophet, sir. He had those Illinois bumpkins all worked up,—the women crying, and some of the men, too. And mad! Good Lord, they were mad—'We will say to the Southern disunionists,' he cried,—'we will say to the Southern disunionists, we won't go out of the Union, and you shan't.'"

There was a silence when the Judge finished. But presently Mr. Carvel took a match. And he stood over the Judge in his favorite attitude, —with his feet apart,—as he lighted another cigar.

"I reckon we're going to have war, Silas," said he, slowly; "but don't you think that your Mr. Lincoln scares me into that belief. I don't count his bluster worth a cent. No sirree! It's this youngster who comes out here from Boston and buys a nigger with all the money he's got in the world. And if he's an impetuous young fool; I'm no judge of men."

"Appleton Brice wasn't precisely impetuous," remarked Mr. Whipple. And he smiled a little bitterly, as though the word had stirred a memory.

"I like that young fellow," Mr. Carvel continued. "It seems to be a kind of fatality with me to get along with Yankees. I reckon there's a screw loose somewhere, but Brice acted the man all the way through. He goa a fall out of you, Silas, in your room, after the show. Where are you going, Jinny?"

Virginia had risen, and she was standing very erects with a flush on her face, waiting for her father to finish.

"To see Anne Brinsmade," she said. "Good-by, Uncle Silas."

She had called him so from childhood. Hers was the one voice that seemed to soften him—it never

failed. He turned to her now with a movement that was almost gentle. "Virginia, I should like you to know my young Yankee," said he.

"Thank you, Uncle Silas," said the girl, with dignity, "but I scarcely think that he would care to know me. He feels so strongly."

"He feels no stronger than I do," replied the Judge.

"You have gotten used to me in eighteen years, and besides," she flashed, "you never spent all the money you had in the world for a principle."

Mr. Whipple smiled as she went out of the door.

"I have spent pretty near all," he said. But more to himself than to the Colonel.

That evening, some young people came in to tea, two of the four big Catherwood boys, Anne Brinsmade and her brother Jack, Puss Russell and Bert, and Eugenie Renault. But Virginia lost her temper. In an evil moment Puss Russell started the subject of the young Yankee who had deprived her of Hester. Puss was ably seconded by Jack Brinsmade, whose reputation as a tormentor extended far back into his boyhood. In vain; did Anne, the peacemaker, try to quench him, while the big Catherwoods and Bert Russell laughed incessantly. No wonder that Virginia was angry. She would not speak to Puss as that young lady bade her good night. And the Colonel, coming home from an evening with Mr. Brinsmade, found his daughter in an armchair, staring into the sitting-room fire. There was no other light in the room Her chin was in her hand, and her lips were pursed.

"Heigho!" said the Colonel, "what's the trouble now?"

"Nothing," said Virginia.

"Come," he insisted, "what have they been doing to my girl?"

"Pa!"

"Yes, honey."

"I don't want to go to balls all my life. I want to go to boarding-school, and learn something. Emily is going to Monticello after Christmas. Pa, will you let me?"

Mr. Carvel winced. He put an arm around her. He, thought of his lonely widowerhood, of her whose place Virginia had taken.

"And what shall I do?" he said, trying to smile.

"It will only be for a little while. And Monticello isn't very far, Pa."

"Well, well, there is plenty of time to think it over between now and January," he said. "And now I have a little favor to ask of you, honey."

"Yes?" she said.

The Colonel took the other armchair, stretched his feet toward the blaze, and stroked his goatee. He glanced covertly at his daughter's profile. Twice he cleared his throat.

"Jinny?"

"Yes, Pa" (without turning her head).

"Jinny, I was going to speak of this young. Brice. He's a stranger here, and he comes of a good family, and—and I like him."

"And you wish me to invite him to my party," finished Virginia.

The Colonel started. "I reckon you guessed it," he said.

Virginia remained immovable. She did not answer at once. Then she said:

"Do you think, in bidding against me, that he behaved, like a gentleman?"

The Colonel blundered.

"Lord, Virginia," he said, "I thought you told the judge this afternoon that it was done out of

principle."

Virginia ignored this. But she bit her lip

"He is like all Yankees, without one bit of consideration for a woman. He knew I wanted Hester."

"What makes you imagine that he thought of you at all, my dear?" asked her father, mildly, "He does not know you."

This time the Colonel scored certainly. The firelight saved Virginia.

"He overheard our conversation," she answered.

"I reckon that he wasn't worrying much about us. And besides, he was trying to save Hester from Jennings."

"I thought that you said that it was to be my party, Pa," said Virginia, irrelevantly.

The Colonel looked thoughtful, then he began to laugh.

"Haven't we enough Black Republican friends?" she asked.

"So you won't have him?" said the Colonel.

"I didn't say that I wouldn't have him," she answered.

The Colonel rose, and brushed the ashes from his goat.

"By Gum!" he said. "Women beat me."

CHAPTER X

THE LITTLE HOUSE

When Stephen attempted to thank Judge Whipple for going on Hester's bond, he merely said, "Tut, tut."

The Judge rose at six, so his man Shadrach told Stephen. He had his breakfast at the Planters' House at seven, read the Missouri Democrat, and returned by eight. Sometimes he would say good morning to Stephen and Richter, and sometimes he would not. Mr. Whipple was out a great part of the day, and he had many visitors. He was a very busy man. Like a great specialist (which he was), he would see only one person at a time. And Stephen soon discovered that his employer did not discriminate between age or sex, or importance, or condition of servitude. In short, Stephen's opinion of Judge Whipple altered very materially before the end of that first week. He saw poor women and disconsolate men go into the private room ahead of rich citizens, who seemed content to wait their turn on the hard wooden chairs against the wall of the main office. There was one incident in particular, when a well-dressed gentleman of middle age paced impatiently for two mortal hours after Shadrach had taken his card into the sanctum. When at last he had been admitted, Mr. Richter whispered to Stephen his name. It was that of a big railroad man from the East. The transom let out the true state of affairs.

"See here, Callender," the Judge was heard to say, "you fellows don't like me, and you wouldn't come here unless you had to. But when your road gets in a tight place, you turn up and expect to walk in ahead of my friends. No, sir, if you want to see me, you've got to wait."

Mr. Callender made some inaudible reply, "Money!" roared the Judge, "take your money to Stetson, and see if you win your case."

Mr. Richter smiled at Stephen, as if in sheer happiness at this vindication of an employer who had never seemed to him to need a defence.

Stephen was greatly drawn toward this young German with the great scar on his pleasant face. And he was itching to know about that scar. Every day, after coming in from dinner, Richter lighted a great brown meerschaum, and read the St. Louis 'Anzeiger' and the 'Westliche Post'. Often he sang quietly to himself:

"Deutschlands Sohne
Laut ertone
Euer Vaterlandgesang.
Vaterland! Du Land des Ruhmes,
Weih' zu deines Heiligthumes
Hutern, uns and unser Schwert."

There were other songs, too. And some wonderful quality in the German's voice gave you a thrill when you heard them, albeit you could not understand the words. Richter never guessed how Stephen, with his eyes on his book, used to drink in those airs. And presently he found out that they were inspired.

The day that the railroad man called, and after he and the Judge had gone out together, the ice was broken.

"You Americans from the North are a queer people, Mr. Brice," remarked Mr. Richter, as he put on his coat. "You do not show your feelings. You are ashamed. The Judge, at first I could not comprehend him—he would scold and scold. But one day I see that his heart is warm, and since then I love him. Have you ever eaten a German dinner, Mr. Brice? No? Then you must come with me, now."

It was raining, the streets ankle-deep in mud, and the beer-garden by the side of the restaurant to which they went was dreary and bedraggled. But inside the place was warm and cheerful. Inside, to all intents and purposes, it was Germany. A most genial host crossed the room to give Mr. Richter a welcome that any man might have envied. He was introduced to Stephen.

"We were all 'Streber' together, in Germany," said Richter.

"You were all what?" asked Stephen, interested.

"Strivers, you might call it in English. In the Vaterland those who seek for higher and better things—for liberty, and to be rid of oppression—are so called. That is why we fought in '48 and lost. And that is why we came here, to the Republic. Ach! I fear I will never be the great lawyer—but the striver, yes, always. We must fight once more to be rid of the black monster that sucks the blood of freedom—vampire. Is it not so in English?"

Stephen was astonished at this outburst.

"You think it will come to war?"

"I fear,—yes, I fear," said the German, shaking his head. "We fear. We are already preparing."

"Preparing? You would fight, Richter? You, a foreigner?"

"A foreigner!" cried Richter, with a flash of anger in his blue eyes that died as suddenly as it came,—died into reproach. "Call me not a foreigner—we Germans will show whether or not we are foreigners when the time is ripe. This great country belongs to all the oppressed. Your ancestors founded it, and fought for it, that the descendants of mine might find a haven from tyranny. My friend, one-half of this city is German, and it is they who will save it if danger arises. You must come with me one night to South St. Louis, that you may know us. Then you will perhaps understand, Stephen. You will not think of us as foreign swill, but as patriots who love our new Vaterland even as you love it. You must come to our Turner Halls, where we are drilling against the time when the Union shall have need of us."

"You are drilling now?" exclaimed Stephen, in still greater astonishment. The German's eloquence had made him tingle, even as had the songs.

"Prosit deine Blume!" answered Richter, smiling and holding up his glass of beer. "You will come to a 'commerce', and see.

"This is not our blessed Lichtenhainer, that we drink at Jena. One may have a pint of Lichtenhainer for less than a groschen at Jena. Aber," he added as he rose, with a laugh that showed his strong teeth, "we Americans are rich."

As Stephen's admiration for his employer grew, his fear of him waxed greater likewise. The Judge's methods of teaching law were certainly not Harvard's methods. For a fortnight he paid as little attention to the young man as he did to the messengers who came with notes and cooled their heels in the outer office until it became the Judge's pleasure to answer them. This was a trifle discouraging to Stephen. But he stuck to his Chitty and his Greenleaf and his Kent. It was Richter who advised him to buy Whittlesey's "Missouri Form Book," and warned him of Mr. Whipple's hatred for the new code. Well that he did! There came a fearful hour of judgment. With the swiftness of a hawk Mr. Whipple

descended out of a clear sky, and instantly the law terms began to rattle in Stephen's head like dried peas in a can. It was the Old Style of Pleading this time, without a knowledge of which the Judge declared with vehemence that a lawyer was not fit to put pen to legal cap.

"Now, sir, the pleadings?" he cried.

"First," said Stephen, "was the Declaration. The answer to that was the Plea. The answer to that was the Replication. Then came the Rejoinder, then the Surrejoinder, then the Rebutter, then the Surrebutter. But they rarely got that far," he added unwisely.

"A good principle in Law, sir," said the Judge, "is not to volunteer information."

Stephen was somewhat cast down when he reached home that Saturday evening. He had come out of his examination with feathers drooping. He had been given no more briefs to copy, nor had Mr. Whipple vouchsafed even to send him on an errand. He had not learned how common a thing it is with young lawyers to feel that they are of no use in the world. Besides, the rain continued. This was the fifth day.

His mother, knitting before the fire in her own room, greeted him with her usual quiet smile of welcome. He tried to give her a humorous account of his catechism of the morning, but failed.

"I am quite sure that he doesn't like me," said Stephen.

His mother continued to smile.

"If he did, he would not show it," she answered.

"I can feel it," said Stephen, dejectedly.

"The Judge was here this afternoon," said his mother.

"What?" cried Stephen. "Again this week? They say that he never calls in the daytime, and rarely in the evening. What did he say?"

"He said that some of this Boston nonsense must be gotten out of you," answered Mrs. Brice, laughing. "He said that you were too stiff. That you needed to rub against the plain men who were building up the West. Who were making a vast world-power of the original little confederation of thirteen states. And Stephen," she added more earnestly, "I am not sure but what he is right."

Then Stephen laughed. And for a long time he sat staring into the fire.

"What else did he say?" he asked, after a while.

"He told me about a little house which we might rent very cheaply. Too cheaply, it seems. The house is on this street, next door to Mr. Brinsmade, to whom it belongs. And Mr. Whipple brought the key, that we might inspect it to-morrow."

"But a servant," objected Stephen, "I suppose that we must have a servant."

His mother's voice fell.

"That poor girl whom you freed is here to see me every day. Old Nancy does washing. But Hester has no work and she is a burden to Judge Whipple. Oh, no," she continued, in response to Stephen's glance, "the Judge did not mention that, but I think he had it in mind that Nester might come. And I am sure that she would."

Sunday dawned brightly. After church Mrs. Brice and Stephen walked down Olive Street, and stood looking at a tiny house wedged in between, two large ones with scrolled fronts. Sad memories of Beacon Street filled them both as they gazed, but they said nothing of this to each other. As Stephen put his hand on the latch of the little iron gate, a gentleman came out of the larger house next door. He was past the middle age, somewhat scrupulously dressed in the old fashion, in swallowtail coat and black stock. Benevolence was in the generous mouth, in the large nose that looked like Washington's, and benevolence fairly sparkled in the blue eyes. He smiled at them as though he had known them always, and the world seemed brighter that very instant. They smiled in return, whereupon the gentleman lifted his hat. And the kindness and the courtliness of that bow made them very happy. "Did you wish to look at the house, madam?" he asked "Yes, sir," said Mrs. Brice.

"Allow me to open it for you," he said, graciously taking the key from her. "I fear that you will find it inconvenient and incommodious, ma'am. I should be fortunate, indeed, to get a good tenant."

He fitted the key in the door, while Stephen and his mother smiled at each other at the thought of the rent. The gentleman opened the door, and stood aside to let them enter, very much as if he were showing them a palace for which he was the humble agent.

They went into the little parlor, which was nicely furnished in mahogany and horsehair. And it had back of it a bit of a dining room, with a little porch overlooking the back yard. Mrs. Brice thought of the dark and stately high-ceiled dining-room she had known throughout her married days: of the board from which a royal governor of Massachusetts Colony had eaten, and some governors of the Commonwealth since. Thank God, she had not to sell that, nor the Brice silver which had stood on the high sideboard with the wolves and the shield upon it. The widow's eyes filled with tears. She had not hoped again to have a home for these things, nor the father's armchair, nor the few family treasures that were to come over the mountains.

The gentleman, with infinite tact, said little, but led the way through the rooms. There were not many of them. At the door of the kitchen he stopped, and laid his hand kindly on Stephen's shoulder:— "Here we may not enter. This is your department, ma'am," said he.

Finally, as they stood without waiting for the gentleman, who insisted upon locking the door, they observed a girl in a ragged shawl hurrying up the street. As she approached them, her eyes were fixed upon the large house next door. But suddenly, as the gentleman turned, she caught sight of him, and from her lips escaped a cry of relief. She flung open the gate, and stood before him.

"Oh, Mr. Brinsmade," she cried, "mother is dying. You have done so much for us, sir,—couldn't you come to her for a little while? She thought if she might see you once more, she would die happy." The voice was choked by a sob.

Mr. Brinsmade took the girl's hand in his own, and turned to the lady with as little haste, with as much politeness, as he had shown before.

"You will excuse me, ma'am," he said, with his hat in his hand.

The widow had no words to answer him. But she and her son watched him as he walked rapidly down the street, his arm in the girl's, until they were out of sight. And then they walked home silently.

Might not the price of this little house be likewise a piece of the Brinsmade charity?

CHAPTER XI

THE INVITATION

Mr. Eliphalet Hopper, in his Sunday-best broadcloth was a marvel of propriety. It seemed to Stephen that his face wore a graver expression on Sunday when he met him standing on Miss Crane's doorstep, picking the lint from his coat. Stephen's intention was not to speak. But he remembered what the Judge had said to his mother, and nodded. Why, indeed, should he put on airs with this man who had come to St. Louis unknown and unrecommended and poor, who by sheer industry had made himself of importance in the large business of Carvel &, Company? As for Stephen Brice, he was not yet earning his salt, but existing by the charity of Judge Silas Whipple.

"Howdy, Mr. Brice," said Mr. Hopper, his glance caught by the indefinable in Stephen's costume. This would have puzzled Mr. Hopper's tailor more.

"Very well, thanks."

"A fine day after the rain."

Stephen nodded, and Mr. Hopper entered the hours after him.

"Be you asked to Virginia Carvel's party?" he asked abruptly.

"I do not know Miss Carvel," said Stephen, wondering how well the other did. And if the truth be told, he was a little annoyed at Mr. Hopper's free use of her name.

"That shouldn't make no difference," said Eliphalet with just a shade of bitterness in his tone. "They

keep open house, like all Southerners," Mr. Hopper hesitated,—“for such as come well recommended. I 'most forgot,” said he. “I callate you're not any too well recommended. I 'most forgot that little transaction down to the Court House. They do say that she wanted that gal almighty bad,—she was most awful cut up not to get her. Served her right, though. I'm glad you did. Show her she can't have everything her own way. And say,” he added, with laughter, “how you did fix that there stuckup Colfax boy! He'll never forgive you no more than she. But,” said Mr. Hopper, meditatively, “it was a durned-fool trick.”

I think Stephen's critics will admit that he had a good right to be angry, and that they will admire him just a little bit because he kept his temper. But Mr. Hopper evidently thought he had gone too far.

“She ain't got no use for me, neither,” he said.

“She shows poor judgment,” answered Stephen.

“She's not long sighted, that's sure,” replied Eliphalet, with emphasis.

At dinner Stephen was tried still further. And it was then he made the determination to write for the newspapers in order to pay the rent on Mr. Brinsmade's house. Miss Carvel's coming-out party was the chief topic.

“They do say the Colonel is to spend a sight of money on that ball,” said Mrs. Abner Reed. “I guess it won't bankrupt him.” And she looked hard at Mr. Hopper.

“I callate he ain't pushed for money,” that gentleman vouchsafed.

“He's a good man, and done well by you, Mr. Hopper.”

“So—so,” answered Eliphalet. “But I will say that I done something for the Colonel. I've saved him a hundred times my pay since I showed old Hood the leaks. And I got a thousand dollar order from Wright & Company this week for him.”

“I dare say you'd keep a tight hand enough on expenses,” said Miss Crane, half in sarcasm, half in approval.

“If Colonel Carvel was doin' business in New England,” said Eliphalet, “he'd been bankrupt long ago.”

“That young Clarence Colfax,” Mrs. Abner Reed broke in, “he'll get a right smart mint o' money when he marries Virginia. They do say her mother left her independent. How now, Mr. Hopper?”

Eliphalet looked mysterious and knowing. He did not reply.

“And young Colfax ain't precisely a pauper,” said Miss Crane.

“I'll risk a good deal that she don't marry Colfax,” said Mr. Hopper.

“What on earth do you mean?” cried Mrs. Abner. “It ain't broke off?”

“No,” he answered, “it ain't broke off. But I callate she won't have him when the time comes. She's got too much sense.”

Heavy at heart, Stephen climbed the stairs, thanking heaven that he had not been drawn into the controversy. A partial comprehension of Mr. Hopper was dawning upon him. He suspected that gentleman of an aggressive determination to achieve wealth, and the power which comes with it, for the purpose of using that power upon those beneath him. Nay, when he thought over his conversation, he suspected him of more,—of the intention to marry Virginia Carvel.

It will be seen whether Stephen was right or wrong.

He took a walk that afternoon, as far out as a place called Lindell's Grove, which afterward became historic. And when he returned to the house, his mother handed him a little white envelope.

“It came while you were out,” she said.

He turned it over, and stared at his name written across the front in a feminine hand. In those days young ladies did not write in the bold and masculine manner now deemed proper. Stephen stared at the note, manlike, and pondered.

“Who brought it, mother?”

"Why don't you open it, and see?" asked his mother with a smile.

He took the suggestion. What a funny formal little note we should think it now! It was not funny to Stephen—then. He read it, and he read it again, and finally he walked over to the window, still holding it in his hand.

Some mothers would have shown their curiosity. Mrs. Brice did not, wherein she proved herself their superiors in the knowledge of mankind.

Stephen stood for a long while looking out into the gathering dusk. Then he went over to the fireplace and began tearing the note into little bits. Only once did he pause, to look again at his name on the envelope.

"It is an invitation to Miss Carvel's party," he said.

By Thursday of that week the Brices, with thanksgiving in their hearts, had taken possession of Mr. Brinsmade's little house.

CHAPTER XII

"MISS JINNY"

The years have sped indeed since that gray December when Miss Virginia Carvel became eighteen. Old St. Louis has changed from a pleasant Southern town to a bustling city, and a high building stands on the site of that wide and hospitable home of Colonel Carvel. And the Colonel's thoughts that morning, as Ned shaved him, flew back through the years to a gently rolling Kentucky countryside, and a pillared white house among the oaks. He was riding again with Beatrice Colfax in the springtime. Again he stretched out his arm as if to seize her bridle-hand, and he felt the thoroughbred rear. Then the vision faded, and the memory of his dead wife became an angel's face, far—so far away.

He had brought her to St. Louis, and with his inheritance had founded his business, and built the great double house on the corner. The child came, and was named after the noble state which had given so many of her sons to the service of the Republic.

Five simple, happy years—then war. A black war of conquest which, like many such, was to add to the nation's fame and greatness: Glory beckoned, honor called—or Comyn Carvel felt them. With nothing of the profession of arms save that born in the Carvels, he kissed Beatrice farewell and steamed down the Mississippi, a captain in Missouri regiment. The young wife was ailing. Anguish killed her. Had Comyn Carvel been selfish?

Ned, as he shaved his master's face, read his thoughts by the strange sympathy of love. He had heard the last pitiful words of his mistress. Had listened, choking, to Dr. Posthlewate as he read the sublime service of the burial of the dead. It was Ned who had met his master, the Colonel, at the levee, and had fallen sobbing at his feet.

Long after he was shaved that morning, the Colonel sat rapt in his chair, while the faithful servant busied himself about the room, one eye on his master the while. But presently Mr. Carvel's reverie is broken by the swift rustle of a dress, and a girlish figure flutters in and plants itself on the wide arm of his mahogany barber chair, Mammy Easter in the door behind her. And the Colonel, stretching forth his hands, strains her to him, and then holds her away that he may look and look again into her face.

"Honey," he said, "I was thinking of your mother."

Virginia raised her eyes to the painting on the wall over the marble mantel. The face under the heavy coils of brown hair was sweet and gentle, delicately feminine. It had an expression of sorrow that seemed a prophecy.

The Colonel's hand strayed upward to Virginia's head.

"You are not like her, honey," he said: "You may see for yourself. You are more like your Aunt Bess, who lived in Baltimore, and she—"

"I know," said Virginia, "she was the image of the beauty, Dorothy

Manners, who married my great-grandfather."

"Yes, Jinny," replied the Colonel, smiling. "That is so. You are somewhat like your great-grandmother."

"Somewhat!" cried Virginia, putting her hand over his mouth, "I like that. You and Captain Lige are always afraid of turning my head. I need not be a beauty to resemble her. I know that I am like her. When you took me on to Calvert House to see Uncle Daniel that time, I remember the picture by, by—"

"Sir Joshua Reynolds."

"Yes, Sir Joshua."

"You were only eleven," says the Colonel.

"She is not a difficult person to remember."

"No," said Mr. Carvel, laughing, "especially if you have lived with her."

"Not that I wish to be that kind," said Virginia, meditatively,— "to take London by storm, and keep a man dangling for years."

"But he got her in the end," said the Colonel. "Where did you hear all this?" he asked.

"Uncle Daniel told me. He has Richard Carvel's diary."

"And a very honorable record it is," exclaimed the Colonel. "Jinny, we shall read it together when we go a-visiting to Culvert House. I remember the old gentleman as well as if I had seen him yesterday."

Virginia appeared thoughtful.

"Pa," she began, "Pa, did you ever see the pearls Dorothy Carvel wore on her wedding day? What makes you jump like that? Did you ever see them?"

"Well, I reckon I did," replied the Colonel, gazing at her steadfastly.

"Pa, Uncle Daniel told me that I was to have that necklace when I was old enough."

"Law!" said the Colonel, fidgeting, "your Uncle Daniel was just fooling you."

"He's a bachelor," said Virginia; what use has he got for it?"

"Why," says the Colonel, "he's a young man yet, your uncle, only fifty-three. I've known older fools than he to go and do it. Eh, Ned?"

"Yes, marsa. Yes, suh. I've seed 'em at seventy, an' shufflin' about peart as Marse Clarence's gamecocks. Why, dar was old Marse Ludlow—"

"Now, Mister Johnson," Virginia put in severely, "no more about old Ludlow."

Ned grinned from ear to ear, and in the ecstasy of his delight dropped the Colonel's clothes-brush. "Lan' sakes!" he cried, "ef she ain't recommembered." Recovering his gravity and the brush simultaneously, he made Virginia a low bow. "Mornin', Miss Jinny. I sholy is gwinter s'lute you dis day. May de good Lawd make you happy, Miss Jinny, an' give you a good husban'—"

"Thank you, Mister Johnson, thank you," said Virginia, blushing.

"How come she recommembered, Marse Comyn? Dat's de quality. Dat's why. Doan't you talk to Ned 'bout de quality, Marsa."

"And when did I ever talk to you about the quality, you scalawag?" asks the Colonel, laughing.

"Th' ain't none 'cept de bes' quality keep they word dat-a-way," said Ned, as he went off to tell Uncle Ben in the kitchen.

Was there ever, in all this wide country, a good cook who was not a tyrant? Uncle Ben Carvel was a veritable emperor in his own domain; and the Colonel himself, had he desired to enter the kitchen, would have been obliged to come with humble and submissive spirit. As for Virginia, she had had since childhood more than one passage at arms with Uncle Ben. And the question of who had come off victorious had been the subject of many a debate below stairs.

There were a few days in the year, however, when Uncle Ben permitted the sanctity of his territory to be violated. One was the seventh of December. On such a day it was his habit to retire to the broken chair beside the sink (the chair to which he had clung for five-and-twenty years). There he would sit, blinking, and carrying on the while an undercurrent of protests and rumblings, while Miss Virginia and other young ladies mixed and chopped and boiled and baked and gossiped. But woe to the unfortunate Rosetta if she overstepped the bounds of respect! Woe to Ned or Jackson or Tato, if they came an inch over the threshold from the hall beyond! Even Aunt Easter stepped gingerly, though she was wont to affirm, when assisting Miss Jinny in her toilet, an absolute contempt for Ben's commands.

"So Ben ordered you out, Mammy?" Virginia would say mischievously.

"Order me out! Hugh! think I'se skeered o' him, honey? Reckon I'd frail 'em good ef he cotched hole of me with his black hands. Jes' let him try to come upstairs once, honey, an' see what I say to 'm."

Nevertheless Ben had, on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, ordered Mammy Easter out, and she had gone. And now, as she was working the beat biscuits to be baked that evening, Uncle Ben's eye rested on her with suspicion.

What mere man may write with any confidence of the delicacies which were prepared in Uncle's kitchen that morning? No need in those days of cooking schools. What Southern lady, to the manner born, is not a cook from the cradle? Even Ben noted with approval Miss Virginia's scorn for pecks and pints, and grunted with satisfaction over the accurate pinches of spices and flavors which she used. And he did Miss Eugenie the honor to eat one of her praleens.

That night came Captain Lige Brent, the figure of an eager and determined man swinging up the street, and pulling out his watch under every lamp-post. And in his haste, in the darkness of a midblock, he ran into another solid body clad in high boots and an old army overcoat, beside a wood wagon.

"Howdy, Captain," said he of the high boots.

"Well, I just thought as much," was the energetic reply; "minute I seen the rig I knew Captain Grant was behind it."

He held out a big hand, which Captain Grant clasped, just looking at his own with a smile. The stranger was Captain Elijah Brent of the 'Louisiana'.

"Now," said Brent, "I'll just bet a full cargo that you're off to the Planters' House, and smoke an El Sol with the boys."

Mr. Grant nodded. "You're keen, Captain," said he.

"I've got something here that'll outlast an El Sol a whole day," continued Captain Brent, tugging at his pocket and pulling out a six-inch cigar as black as the night. "Just you try that."

The Captain instantly struck a match on his boot and was puffing in a silent enjoyment which delighted his friend.

"Reckon he don't bring out cigars when you make him a call," said the steamboat captain, jerking his thumb up at the house. It was Mr. Jacob Cluyme's.

Captain Grant did not reply to that, nor did Captain Lige expect him to, as it was the custom of this strange and silent man to speak ill of no one. He turned rather to put the stakes back into his wagon.

"Where are you off to, Lige?" he asked.

"Lord bless my soul," said Captain Lige, "to think that I could forget!" He tucked a bundle tighter under his arm. "Grant, did you ever see my little sweetheart, Jinny Carvel?" The Captain sighed. "She ain't little any more, and she eighteen to-day."

Captain Grant clapped his hand to his forehead.

"Say, Lige," said he, "that reminds me. A month or so ago I pulled a fellow out of Renault's area across from there. First I thought he was a thief. After he got away I saw the Colonel and his daughter in the window."

Instantly Captain Lige became excited, and seized Captain Grant by the cape of his overcoat.

"Say, Grant, what kind of appearing fellow was he?"

"Short, thick-set, blocky face."

"I reckon I know," said Breast, bringing down his fist on the wagon board; "I've had my eye on him for some little time."

He walked around the block twice after Captain Grant had driven down the muddy street, before he composed himself to enter the Carvel mansion. He paid no attention to the salutations of Jackson, the butler, who saw him coming and opened the door, but climbed the stairs to the sitting-room.

"Why, Captain Lige, you must have put wings on the Louisiana," said Virginia, rising joyfully from the arm of her father's chair to meet him. "We had given you up."

"What?" cried the Captain. "Give me up? Don't you know better than that? What, give me up when I never missed a birthday,—and this the best of all of 'em."

"If your pa had got sight of me shovin' in wood and cussin' the pilot for slowin' at the crossin's, he'd never let you ride in my boat again. Bill Jenks said: 'Are you plum crazy, Brent? Look at them cressets.' 'Five dollars' says I; 'wouldn't go in for five hundred. To-morrow's Jinny Carvel's birthday, and I've just got to be there.' I reckon the time's come when I've got to say Miss Jinny," he added ruefully.

The Colonel rose, laughing, and hit the Captain on the back.

"Drat you, Lige, why don't you kiss the girl? Can't you see she's waiting?"

The honest Captain stole one glance at Virginia, and turned red copper color.

"Shucks, Colonel, I can't be kissing her always. What'll her husband say?"

For an instant Mr. Carvel's brow clouded.

"We'll not talk of husbands yet awhile, Lige."

Virginia went up to Captain Lige, deftly twisted into shape his black tie, and kissed him on the check. How his face burned when she touched him.

"There!" said she, "and don't you ever dare to treat me as a young lady. Why, Pa, he's blushing like a girl. I know. He's ashamed to kiss me now. He's going to be married at last to that Creole girl in New Orleans."

The Colonel slapped his knee, winked slyly at Lige, while Virginia began to sing:

"I built me a house on the mountain so high,
To gaze at my true love as she do go by."

"There's only one I'd ever marry, Jinny," protested the Captain, soberly, "and I'm a heap too old for her. But I've seen a youngster that might mate with her, Colonel," he added mischievously. "If he just wasn't a Yankee. Jinny, what's the story I hear about Judge Whipple's young man buying Hester?"

Mr. Carvel looked uneasy. It was Virginia's turn to blush, and she grew red as a peony.

"He's a tall, hateful, Black Republican Yankee!" she said.

"Phee-ew!" whistled the Captain. "Any more epithets?"

"He's a nasty Abolitionist!"

"There you do him wrong, honey," the Colonel put in.

"I hear he took Hester to Miss Crane's," the Captain continued, filling the room with his hearty laughter. "That boy has sand enough, Jinny; I'd like to know him."

"You'll have that priceless opportunity to-night," retorted Miss Virginia, as she flung herself out of the room. "Pa has made me invite him to my party."

"Here, Jinny! Hold on!" cried the Captain, running after her. "I've got something for you."

She stopped on the stairs, hesitating. Whereupon the Captain hastily ripped open the bundle under his arm and produced a very handsome India shawl. With a cry of delight Virginia threw it over her shoulders and ran to the long glass between the high windows.

"Who spoils her, Lige?" asked the Colonel, fondly.

"Her father, I reckon," was the prompt reply.

"Who spoils you, Jinny?"

"Captain Lige," said she, turning to him. "If you had only kept the presents you have brought me from New Orleans, you might sell out your steamboat and be a rich man."

"He is a rich man," said the Colonel, promptly. "Did you ever miss bringing her a present, Lige?" he asked.

"When the Cora Anderson burnt," answered the Captain.

"Why," cried Virginia, "you brought me a piece of her wheel, with the char on it. You swam ashore with it."

"So I did," said Captain Brent. "I had forgotten that. It was when the French dress, with the furbelows, which Madame Pitou had gotten me from Paris for you, was lost."

"And I think I liked the piece of wheel better," says Virginia. "It was brought me by a brave man, the last to leave his boat."

"And who should be the last to leave, but the captain? I saw the thing in the water; and I just thought we ought to have a relic."

"Lige," said the Colonel, putting up his feet, "do you remember the French toys you used to bring up here from New Orleans?"

"Colonel," replied Brent, "do you recall the rough and uncouth young citizen who came over here from Cincinnati, as clerk on the Vicksburg?"

"I remember, sir, that he was so promising that they made him provisional captain the next trip, and he was not yet twenty-four years of age."

"And do you remember buying the Vicksburg at the sheriff's sale for twenty thousand dollars, and handing her over to young Brent, and saying, 'There, my son, she's your boat, and you can pay for her when you like'?"

"Shucks, Brent!" said Mr. Carvel, sternly, "your memory's too good. But I proved myself a good business man, Jinny; he paid for her in a year."

"You don't mean that you made him pay you for the boat?" cried Jinny.

"Why, Pa, I didn't think you were that mean!"

The two men laughed heartily.

"I was a heap meaner," said her father. "I made him pay interest."

Virginia drew in her breath, and looked at the Colonel in amazement.

"He's the meanest man I know," said Captain Lige. "He made me pay interest, and a mint julep."

"Upon my word, Pa," said Miss Virginia, soberly, "I shouldn't have believed it of you."

Just then Jackson, in his white jacket; came to announce that supper was ready, and they met Ned at the dining-room door, fairly staggering under a load of roses.

"Marse Clarence done send 'em in, des picked out'n de hothouse dis afternoon, Miss Jinny. Jackson, fotch a bowl!"

"No," said Virginia. She took the flowers from Ned, one by one, and to the wonderment of Captain Lige and her—father strewed them hither and thither upon the table until the white cloth was hid by the red flowers. The Colonel stroked his goatee and nudged Captain Lige.

"Look-a-there, now," said he. "Any other woman would have spent two mortal hours stickin' 'em in china."

Virginia, having critically surveyed her work, amid exclamations from Ned and Jackson, had gone around to her place. And there upon her plate lay a pearl necklace. For an instant she clapped her palms together, staring at it in bewilderment. And once more the little childish cry of delight, long sweet to the Colonel's ears, escaped her.

"Pa," she said, "is it—?" And there she stopped, for fear that it might not be. But he nodded encouragingly.

"Dorothy Carvel's necklace! No, it can't be."

"Yes, honey," said the Colonel. "Your Uncle Daniel sent it, as he promised. And when you go upstairs, if Easter has done as I told her, you will see a primrose dress with blue coin-flowers on your bed. Daniel thought you might like that, too, for a keepsake. Dorothy Manners wore it in London, when she was a girl."

And so Virginia ran and threw her arms about her father's neck, and kissed him again and again. And lest the Captain feel badly, she laid his India shawl beside her; and the necklace upon it.

What a joyful supper they had,—just the three of them! And as the fresh roses filled the room with fragrance, Virginia filled it with youth and spirits, and Mr. Carvel and the Captain with honest, manly merriment. And Jackson plied Captain Brent (who was a prime favorite in that house) with broiled chicken and hot beat biscuits and with waffles, until at length he lay back in his chair and heaved a sigh of content, lighting a cigar. And then Virginia, with a little curtsy to both of them, ran off to dress for the party.

"Well," said Captain Brent, "I reckon there'll be gay goings-on here to-night. I wouldn't miss the sight of 'em, Colonel, for all the cargoes on the Mississippi. Ain't there anything I can do?"

"No, thank you, Lige," Mr. Carvel answered. "Do you remember, one morning some five years ago, when I took in at the store a Yankee named Hopper? You didn't like him, I believe."

Captain Brent jumped, and the ashes of his cigar fell on his coat. He had forgotten his conversation with Captain Grant.

"I reckon I do," he said dryly.

For a moment he was on the point of telling the affair. Then he desisted. He could not be sure of Elphalet from Grant's description. So he decided to await a better time. Captain Brent was one to make sure of his channel before going ahead.

"Well," continued the Colonel, "I have been rather pushed the last week, and Hopper managed things for this dance. He got the music, and saw the confectioner. But he made such a close bargain with both of 'em that they came around to me afterward," he added, laughing.

"Is he coming here to-night?" demanded the Captain, looking disgusted.

"Lige," replied the Colonel, "you never do get over a prejudice. Yes, he's coming, just to oversee things. He seems to have mighty little pleasure, and he's got the best business head I ever did see. A Yankee," said Mr. Carvel, meditatively, as he put on his hat, "a Yankee, when he will work, works like all possessed. Hood don't like him any more than you do, but he allows Hopper is a natural-born business man. Last month Samuels got tight, and Wright & Company were going to place the largest order in years. I called in Hood. 'Go yourself, Colonel,' says he. I I'm too old to solicit business, Hood,' said I. 'Then there's only one man to send,' says he, 'young Hopper. He'll get the order, or I'll give up this place I've had for twenty years.' Hopper 'callated' to get it, and another small one pitched in. And you'd die laughing, Lige, to hear how he did it."

"Some slickness, I'll gamble," grunted Captain Lige.

"Well, I reckon 'twas slick," said the Colonel, thoughtfully. "You know old man Wright hates a solicitor like poison. He has his notions. And maybe you've noticed signs stuck up all over his store, 'No Solicitors nor Travelling Men Allowed Here'"

The Captain nodded.

"But Hopper—Hopper walks in, sir, bold as you please, right past the signs till he comes to the old man's cage. 'I want to see Mr. Wright,' says he to the clerk. And the clerk begins to grin. 'Name, please,' says he. Mr. Hopper whips out his business card. 'What!' shouts old Wright, flying 'round in his chair, 'what the devil does this mean? Can't you read, sir?' 'callate to,' says Mr. Hopper. 'And you dare to come in here?'"

"'Business is business,' says Hopper. 'You "callate"!'" bellowed the old man; 'I reckon you're a damned Yankee. I reckon I'll upset your "callations" for once. And if I catch you in here again, I'll wring your neck like a roostah's. Git!'"

"Who told you this?" asked Captain Brent.

"Wright himself,—afterward," replied Mr. Carvel, laughing. "But listen, Lige. The old man lives at the Planters' House, you know. What does Mr. Hopper do but go 'round there that very night and give a nigger two bits to put him at the old man's table. When Wright comes and sees him, he nearly has one of his apoplectic fits. But in marches Hopper the next morning with twice the order. The good Lord knows how he did it."

There was a silence. Then the door-bell rang.

"He's dangerous," said the Captain, emphatically. "That's what I call him."

"The Yankees are changing business in this town," was the Colonel's answer. "We've got to keep the pace, Lige."

CHAPTER XIII

THE PARTY

To gentle Miss Anne Brinsmade, to Puss Russell of the mischievous eyes, and even to timid Eugenie Renault, the question that burned was: Would he come, or would he not? And, secondarily, how would Virginia treat him if he came? Put our friend Stephen for the subjective, and Miss Carver's party for the objective in the above, and we have the clew. For very young girls are given to making much out of a very little in such matters. If Virginia had not gotten angry when she had been teased a fortnight before, all would have been well.

Even Puss, who walked where angels feared to tread, did not dare to go too far with Virginia. She had taken care before the day of the party to beg forgiveness with considerable humility. It had been granted with a queenly generosity. And after that none of the bevy had dared to broach the subject to Virginia. Jack Brinsmade had. He told Puss afterward that when Virginia got through with him, he felt as if he had taken a rapid trip through the wheel-house of a large steamer. Puss tried, by various ingenious devices, to learn whether Mr. Brice had accepted his invitation. She failed.

These things added a zest to a party long looked forward to amongst Virginia's intimates. In those days young ladies did not "come out" so frankly as they do now. Mothers did not announce to the world that they possessed marriageable daughters. The world was supposed to know that. And then the matrimonial market was feverishly active. Young men proposed as naturally as they now ask a young girl to go for a walk,—and were refused quite as naturally. An offer of marriage was not the fearful and wonderful thing—to be dealt with gingerly—which it has since become. Seventeen was often the age at which they began. And one of the big Catherwood boys had a habit of laying his heart and hand at Virginia's feet once a month. Nor did his vanity suffer greatly when she laughed at him.

It was with a flutter of excitement, therefore, that Miss Carvel's guests flitted past Jackson, who held the door open obsequiously. The boldest of them took a rapid survey of the big parlor, before they put foot on the stairs to see whether Mr. Brice had yet arrived. And if their curiosity held them too long, they were usually kissed by the Colonel.

Mr. Carvel shook hands heartily with the young men and called them by their first names, for he knew most of their fathers and grandfathers. And if an older gentleman arrived, perhaps the two might be seen going down the hall together, arm in arm. So came his beloved enemy, Judge Whipple, who did not make an excursion to the rear regions of the house with the Colonel; but they stood and discussed Mr. President Buchanan's responsibility for the recent panic, until the band, which Mr. Hopper had stationed under the stairs, drowned their voices.

As we enter the room, there stands Virginia under the rainbowed prisms of the great chandelier, receiving. But here was suddenly a woman of twenty-eight, where only this evening we knew a slip of a girl. It was a trick she had, to become majestic in a ball-gown. She held her head high, as a woman should, and at her slender throat glowed the pearls of Dorothy Manners.

The result of all this was to strike a little awe into the souls of many of her playmates. Little Eugenie nearly dropped a curtsey. Belle Cluyne was so impressed that she forgot for a whole hour to be spiteful. But Puss Russell kissed her on both cheeks, and asked her if she really wasn't nervous.

"Nervous!" exclaimed Jinny, "why?"

Miss Russell glanced significantly towards the doorway. But she said nothing to her hostess, for fear of marring an otherwise happy occasion. She retired with Jack Brim made to a corner, where she recited:—

"Oh young Lochinvar is come out of the East;
Of millions of Yankees I love him the least."

"What a joke if he should come!" cried Jack.

Miss Russell gasped.

Just as Mr. Clarence Colfax, resplendent in new evening clothes just arrived from New York, was pressing his claim for the first dance with his cousin in opposition to numerous other claims, the chatter of the guests died away. Virginia turned her head, and for an instant the pearls trembled on her neck. There was a young man cordially and unconcernedly shaking hands with her father and Captain Lige. Her memory of that moment is, strangely, not of his face (she did not deign to look at that), but of the muscle of his shoulder half revealed as he stretched forth his arm.

Young Mr. Colfax bent over to her ear.

"Virginia," he whispered earnestly, almost fiercely, Virginia, who invited him here?"

"I did," said Virginia, calmly, "of course. Who invites any one here?"

"But!" cried Clarence, "do you know who he is?"

"Yes," she answered, "I know. And is that any reason why he should not come here as a guest? Would you bar any gentleman from your house on account of his convictions?"

Ah, Virginia, who had thought to hear that argument from your lips? What would frank Captain Lige say of the consistency of women, if he heard you now? And how give an account of yourself to Anne Brinsmade? What contrariness has set you so intense against your own argument?

Before one can answer this, before Mr. Clarence can recover from his astonishment and remind her of her vehement words on the subject at Bellegarde, Mr. Stephen is making thither with the air of one who conquers. Again the natural contrariness of women. What bare-faced impudence! Has he no shame that he should hold his head so high? She feels her color mounting, even as her resentment rises at his self-possession, and yet she would have despised him had he shown self-consciousness in gait or manner in the sight of her assembled guests. Nearly as tall as the Colonel himself, he is plainly seen, and Miss Puss in her corner does not have to stand on tiptoe. Mr. Carvel does the honors of the introduction.

But a daughter of the Carvels was not to fail before such a paltry situation as this. Shall it be confessed that curiosity stepped into the breach? As she gave him her hand she was wondering how he would act.

As a matter of fact he acted detestably. He said nothing whatever, but stood regarding her with a clear eye and a face by far too severe. The thought that he was meditating on the incident of the auction sale crossed through her mind, and made her blood simmer. How dared he behave so! The occasion called for a little small talk. An evil spirit took possession of Virginia. She turned.

"Mr. Brice, do you know my cousin, Mr. Colfax?" she said.

Mr. Brice bowed. "I know Mr. Colfax by sight," he replied.

Then Mr. Colfax made a stiff bow. To this new phase his sense of humor did not rise. Mr. Brice was a Yankee and no gentleman, inasmuch as he had overbid a lady for Hester.

"Have you come here to live, Mr. Brice?" he asked.

The Colonel eyed his nephew sharply. But Stephen smiled.

"Yes," he said, "if I can presently make enough to keep me alive." Then turning to Virginia, he said, "Will you dance, Miss Carvel?"

The effrontery of this demand quite drew the breath from the impatient young gentlemen who had been waiting their turn. Several of them spoke up in remonstrance. And for the moment (let one confess it who knows), Virginia was almost tempted to lay her arm in his. Then she made a bow that

would have been quite as effective the length of the room.

"Thank you, Mr. Brice," she said, "but I am engaged to Mr. Colfax."

Abstractedly he watched her glide away in her cousin's arms. Stephen had a way of being preoccupied at such times. When he grew older he would walk the length of Olive Street, look into face after face of acquaintances, not a quiver of recognition in his eyes. But most probably the next week he would win a brilliant case in the Supreme Court. And so now, indifferent to the amusement of some about him, he stood staring after Virginia and Clarence. Where had he seen Colfax's face before he came West? Ah, he knew. Many, many years before he had stood with his father in the mellow light of the long gallery at Hollingdean, Kent, before a portrait of the Stuarts' time. The face was that of one of Lord Northwell's ancestors, a sporting nobleman of the time of the second Charles. It was a head which compelled one to pause before it. Strangely enough,—it was the head likewise of Clarence Colfax.

The image of it Stephen had carried undimmed in the eye of his memory. White-haired Northwell's story, also. It was not a story that Mr. Brice had expected his small son to grasp. As a matter of fact Stephen had not grasped it then—but years afterward. It was not a pleasant story,—and yet there was much of credit in it to the young rake its subject,—of dash and courage and princely generosity beside the profligacy and incontinence.

The face had impressed him, with its story. He had often dreamed of it, and of the lace collar over the dull-gold velvet that became it so well. And here it was at last, in a city west of the Mississippi River. Here were the same delicately chiselled features, with their pallor, and satiety engraved there at one and twenty. Here was the same lazy scorn in the eyes, and the look which sleeplessness gives to the lids: the hair, straight and fine and black; the wilful indulgence—not of one life, but of generations—about the mouth; the pointed chin. And yet it was a fact to dare anything, and to do anything.

One thing more ere we have done with that which no man may explain. Had he dreamed, too, of the girl? Of Virginia? Stephen might not tell, but thrice had the Colonel spoken to him before he answered.

"You must meet some of these young ladies, sir."

It was little wonder that Puss Russell thought him dull on that first occasion. Out of whom condescension is to flow is a matter of which Heaven takes no cognizance. To use her own words, Puss thought him "stuck up," when he should have been grateful. We know that Stephen was not stuck up, and later Miss Russell learned that likewise. Very naturally she took preoccupation for indifference. It is a matter worth recording, however, that she did not tease him, because she did not dare. He did not ask her to dance, which was rude. So she passed him back to Mr. Carvel, who introduced him to Miss Renault and Miss Saint Cyr, and other young ladies of the best French families. And finally, drifting hither and thither with his eyes on Virginia, in an evil moment he was presented to Mrs. Colfax. Perhaps it has been guessed that Mrs. Colfax was a very great lady indeed, albeit the daughter of an overseer. She bore Addison Colfax's name, spent his fortune, and retained her good looks. On this particular occasion she was enjoying herself quite as much as any young girl in the room, and, while resting from a waltz, was regaling a number of gentlemen with a humorous account of a scandal at the Virginia Spring's.

None but a great lady could have meted out the punishment administered to poor Stephen. None but a great lady could have concerned it. And he, who had never been snubbed before, fell headlong into her trap. How was the boy to know that there was no heart in the smile with which she greeted him? It was all over in an instant. She continued to talk about Virginia Springs, "Oh, Mr. Brice, of course you have been there. Of course you know the Edmunds. No? You haven't been there? You don't know the Edmunds? I thought every body had been there. Charles, you look as if you were just dying to waltz. Let's have a turn before the music stops."

And so she whirled away, leaving Stephen forlorn, a little too angry to be amused just then. In that state he spied a gentleman coming towards him—a gentleman the sight of whom he soon came to associate with all that is good and kindly in this world, Mr. Brinsmade. And now he put his hand on Stephen's shoulder. Whether he had seen the incident just past, who can tell?

"My son," said he, "I am delighted to see you here. Now that we are such near neighbors, we must be nearer friends. You must know my wife, and my son Jack, and my daughter Anne."

Mrs. Brinsmade was a pleasant little body, but plainly not a fit mate for her husband. Jack gave Stephen a warm grasp of the hand, and an amused look. As for Anne, she was more like her father; she was Stephen's friend from that hour.

"I have seen you quite often, going in at your gate, Mr. Brice. And I have seen your mother, too. I like her," said Anne. "She has such a wonderful face." And the girl raised her truthful blue eyes to his.

"My mother would be delighted to know you," he ventured, not knowing what else to say. It was an effort for him to reflect upon their new situation as poor tenants to a wealthy family.

"Oh, do you think so?" cried Anne. "I shall call on her to-morrow, with mother. Do you know, Mr. Brice," she continued, "do you know that your mother is just the person I should go to if I were in trouble, whether I knew her or not?"

"I have found her a good person in trouble," said Stephen, simply. He might have said the same of Anne.

Anne was enchanted. She had thought him cold, but these words belied that. She had wrapped him in that diaphanous substance with which young ladies (and sometimes older ones) are wont to deck their heroes. She had approached a mystery—to find it human, as are many mysteries. But thank heaven that she found a dignity, a seriousness,—and these more than satisfied her. Likewise, she discovered something she had not looked for, an occasional way of saying things that made her laugh. She danced with him, and passed him back to Miss Puss Russell, who was better pleased this time; she passed him on to her sister, who also danced with him, and sent him upstairs for her handkerchief.

Nevertheless, Stephen was troubled. As the evening wore on, he was more and more aware of an uncompromising attitude in his young hostess, whom he had seen whispering to various young ladies from behind her fan as they passed her. He had not felt equal to asking her to dance a second time. Honest Captain Lige Breast, who seemed to have taken a fancy to him, bandied him on his lack of courage with humor that was a little rough. And, to Stephen's amazement, even Judge Whipple had pricked him on.

It was on his way upstairs after Emily Russell's handkerchief that he ran across another acquaintance. Mr. Elphalet Hopper, in Sunday broadcloth, was seated on the landing, his head lowered to the level of the top of the high door of the parlor. Stephen caught a glimpse of the picture whereon his eyes were fixed. Perhaps it is needless to add that Miss Virginia Carvel formed the central figure of it.

"Enjoy in' yourself?" asked Mr. Hopper.

Stephen countered.

"Are you?" he asked.

"So so," said Mr. Hopper, and added darkly: "I ain't in no hurry. Just now they callate I'm about good enough to manage the business end of an affair like this here. I guess I can wait. But some day," said he, suddenly barring Stephen's way, "some day I'll give a party. And hark to me when I tell you that these here aristocrats 'll be glad enough to get invitations."

Stephen pushed past coldly. This time the man made him shiver. The incident was all that was needed to dishearten and disgust him. Kindly as he had been treated by others, far back in his soul was a thing that rankled. Shall it be told crudely why he went that night? Stephen Brice, who would not lie to others, lied to himself. And when he came downstairs again and presented Miss Emily with her handkerchief, his next move was in his mind. And that was to say good-night to the Colonel, and more frigidly to Miss Carvel herself. But music has upset many a man's calculations.

The strains of the Jenny Lind waltz were beginning to float through the rooms. There was Miss Virginia in a corner of the big parlor, for the moment alone with her cousin. And thither Stephen sternly strode. Not a sign did she give of being aware of his presence until he stood before her. Even then she did not lift her eyes. But she said: "So you have come at last to try again, Mr. Brice?"

And Mr. Brice said: "If you will do me the honor, Miss Carvel."

She did not reply at once. Clarence Colfax got to his feet. Then she looked up at the two men as they stood side by side, and perhaps swept them both in an instant's comparison.

The New Englander's face must have reminded her more of her own father, Colonel Carvel. It possessed, from generations known, the power to control itself. She afterwards admitted that she accepted him to tease Clarence. Miss Russell, whose intuitions are usually correct, does not believe this.

"I will dance with you," said Virginia.

But, once in his arms, she seemed like a wild thing, resisting. Although her gown brushed his coat, the space between them was infinite, and her hand lay limp in his, unresponsive of his own pressure. Not so her feet; they caught the step and moved with the rhythm of the music, and round the room they

swung. More than one pair paused in the dance to watch them. Then, as they glided past the door, Stephen was disagreeably conscious of some one gazing down from above, and he recalled Eliphalet Hopper and his position. The sneer from Eliphalet's seemed to penetrate like a chilly draught.

All at once, Virginia felt her partner gathering up his strength, and by some compelling force, more of wild than of muscle, draw her nearer. Unwillingly her hand tightened under his, and her blood beat faster and her color came and went as they two moved as one. Anger—helpless anger—took possession of her as she saw the smiles on the faces of her friends, and Puss Russell mockingly throwing a kiss as she passed her. And then, strange in the telling, a thrill as of power rose within her which she strove against in vain. A knowledge of him who guided her so swiftly, so unerringly, which she had felt with no other man. Faster and faster they stepped, each forgetful of self and place, until the waltz came suddenly to a stop.

"By gum!" said Captain Lige to Judge Whipple, "you can whollop me on my own forecastle if they ain't the handsomest couple I ever did see."

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