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CHATHAM

A STORY OF LOVE AND WAR.

STATE OF BY MARY J. HOLMES,

Author of "Lena Rivers," "Edna Browning," "Tempest and Sunshine," Etc., Etc.

into the Massachusetts boys?-and were from right round Boston, Tom saw them when they started. They were fine-looking men, he says, and Will thinks I ought to be proud that I'm a Bay State girl, but it ign't as if my friends had gone. Tom is a Democrat, I know, but it's quite nother kind that join the army.'

Widow Simms could keep silent no nger, and brandishing her polished hears by way of adding emphasis to hat she said, she began:
"And s'posin' 'tis folks as poor as po

rty struck, haint they feelin's I'd like know? Haint they got bodies and ouls, and mothers, and wives, and sisters? And s'posin' ('tis Democrats, pere shame for t'other side that helped get up the muss. Where be they now them chaps that wore the big black capes, and did so much toward puttin' Lincoln in that chair? Why don't they help to keep him settin' there, and not stand back with their hands tucked in heir trouses' pockets? Both my boys, Eli and John, voted t'other ticket, and Isaac would, but he wasn't twenty-one. They've all jined, and I won't say I'm sorry, for if there's anything I hate it's a sneak! It makes me so mad!" and the big shears again clicked say agely, as Widow Simms resumed her work, after having thus delivered her pinion of the black Republicans, be sides havin, in her own words, given "that puckerin' Miss Mathers a piece of her mind."

Obtuse as Rose was on many points, she saw there was some homely truth in what the widow had said, but this did not impress her so much as the fact that she had evidently given offence, and she was about trying to extricate herself from the dilemma when George Graham appeared, ostensibly to bring some trivial message to the president of the society, but really to see if his wife were there, and speak to her some kind word of encouragement. Rose recognized him as the young man she had seen at the war-meeting, and the moment he left the hall she broke

out impetuously: "Isn't he handsome?-so tall, broad-shouldered, and such a splendid mark for a bullet,-I 'most know he

"Hush-sh!" came warningly from several individuals. but came too late. The nischief was done. Ere Rose could collect her thoughts a group of frightened women had gathered around poor Annie, who had fainted.

"What's the matter? do tell!" cried Rose, standing on tip-toe and clutching at the dress of Widow Simms, who "I should s'pose you'd ask. It's

enough to make the poor critter faint clean away to hear a body talk about her husband's being a fust rate mark for a bullet!"

With all her thoughtlessness, Rose had the kindest heart in the world; and forcing her way through the crowd, she knelt by the white-faced Annie, and taking the drooping head in her lap, pushed back the thick braids of hair, noticing, with her quick eye for the beautiful, how soft and luxuriant they were, how pure was the complexon, how perfect were the features; how small and delicate the fingers, and how graceful was the slender neck.
"I'm so sorry! I wish I'd stayed at

home; I am so sorry," she kept repeating; and when at last Annie returned to consciousness, Rose Mather's was the first voice she heard. Rose's the first face she saw.

With an involuntarily shudder she closed her eyes wearily, while Rose anxiously asked of those about her how they should get her home. "Oh, Jake," she suddenly exclaimed, as, towering above the female heads, she saw her colored coachman looking for her, and remembered that her husband was to call and take her out to ride, "oh, Jake, lift this lady up, carefully as you can, and put her in our carriage. Is Will there? Well, no matter, he'll just have to get out. Stand back, won't you, and let Jake come?" she continued, authoritatively to the group of ladies, who, half amused and half surprised at this new phase in Rose Mather's character, made way for burly Jake, who lifted Annie's light form as if it had been a feather's weight, and bore it down the stairs, followed by Rose, who, with one breath, told Annie not to be a bit afraid, for Jake certainly would not drop her, and with the next asked Jake if he were positive and sure he was strong enough not

to let her fall. Lazily reclining upon the cushions of his carriage, William Mather was smoking his Havana, and admiring the sleek coat of his iron grays, when Rose appeared, and, seizing him by the arm, peremptorily ordered him to alight and help Jake lift the lady in—
"I don't know who 'tis, but it's some—

body I made faint away with my silly talk," she replied in answer to Mr. Mather's question, "Who have you there?"
"You made faint away!" he repeated, as he found himself landed rather unceremoniously upon the flagging stones his Havana rolling at his feet, and his wife preparing to follow Annie, whom Jake had placed inside.

"Yes; I talked about her husband's being a splendid mark for a bullet, and all that, without ever thinking she was his wife. He looked so tall, and big, and nice, that I couldn't help thinking his head would come above all the rest in a fight, but I don't believe it will. There Jake, we are ready now, drive on," said Rose, while poor Annie groaned afresh at this doubtful conso-

"Drive whar?" asked Jake. "I dun

"Mr. Graham himself is coming. see. I think, Rose, you had best give your place to him." Rose, who was fond of adventures wanted sadly to go with Annie, but George, when he came up, seemed so concerned, and asked so many ques tions, that she deemed it best to leave it for his wife to make the necessary explanations, merely saying, as sh stepped upon the walk:

Rose, turning inquiringly to her hus

ing, as he glanced down the street:

band, who gave the information, add-

"I am so sorry, Mr. Graham, I really did not mean anything wrong in saying I knew you'd be shot, for you

"Rose, your dress is rubbing the interrupted Mr. Mather, by wheel," way of diverting Rose from repeating the act for which she was expressing

"No it ain't rubbing the wheel, either. It isn't anywhere near it," said Rose, wondering what Will could mean; while George, taking a seat by Annie, smiled at what he saw to be a ruse. Bent upon reconciliation, Rose press ed up to the carriage, and said to Annie, "You won't be angry at me always,

will you? I shouldn't have thought of it, only he does look so-"Go on, Jake," Mr. Mather called out, cutting short Rose's speech, and the next moment Annie was driving down the street in Rose Mather's carriage, and behind the iron grays, an honor she had never dreamed in store for her when she saw the stylish turnout passing the door of her cottage in

CHAPTER III.

The 13th Regiment was ordered to Elmira, and the day had arrived for the departure of the volunteers. Bright was the sun and cloudless the sky which shone on Rockland that spring day; but cloudless sky nor warm spring sun could comfort the hearts about to part with her treasures, some forever, and some to meet again, but when, or where, or how, none could tell save Him who holds the secrets of the fu-

There were mothers who had never

felt a pang so keen or a pain so sore, as when with hearts too full of anguish for the dry, red eyes to weep, they watched their sons pass from the threshold of the door, and knew that when the golden sunlight, falling so brightly around them, was purple in the west, they would look in vain for that returning step, and listen in vain for tones which were the first, perhaps, to stir the deep fountains of maternal Fathers, too, were there, with heads bent down to hide the tears they deemed it weak to shed, as they gave their farewell blessing to their boy, praying that God might be over and around him, both when the deafening battle roar was sounding in his ear and when, in the stilly night, he wrapped his blanket about him and laid him down to rest, sometimes with the southern stars shining upon him and sometimes with the southern rain falling on his unsheltered head, for all these vicissitudes must come to a soldier on the Wives and sisters, too, were there, who shuddered as they thought how the dear ones to whom they said good-bye, would miss the comforts they were leaving, miss the downy pillow the soft, warm bed made with loving bands, and the luxuries of home never prized one-half so much as now, when they were to be exchanged for a life within the camp. And there were maidens, from whose cheeks the roses faded, as they gave the parting kiss, and promised to be faithful, even though the manly form the lover bore away should back to them all maimed and crushed and crippled with the toil of war. Far better so than not to come at all. At least so Annie Graham thought, as, winding her arms around her husband's neck, she whispered to



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you just the same as I do now," and with her fair head lying on his bosom, Annie wept piteously.

Not till then had she realized what it was to let him go. She had become somewhat accustomed to thinking of it,—accustomed to see him pass in and out, dressed in his stylish which made him look so handsome and then she had hoped the regiment rould not be ordered for a long, long time, never, perhaps; but now dream was over; the dreaded hour had come, and for a moment Annie felt herself too weak to meet it. Through the livelong night she had prayed, or if perchance sleep for a moment shut the swollen lids, the lips had moved in prayer that her husband might come back to her again, or, failing to do so, that he might grasp, even at the eleventh hour, the Christian's faith, and so go to the Christian's home, where they would meet once more. She had given him her little Bible, all pencil-marked and worn with daily usage,-the one she read when first the spirit taught her the meaning of its great mysteries. -and George had promised he would read it every day,-had said that when he went to battle he would place it next his heart, a talisman to shield him from the bullets of the foe. And Annie, smiling through her tears, pointed him again to the only One who could stand between him and death, asking that when he was far away, he would remember what she said, and pray to the God she honored. "It's time now, darling," he said, at

last, as he heard in the distance the beat of the drum.

But the clinging arms refused leave his neck, and the quivering lips pressed so constantly to his murmured: "Wait a little minute more. "Tis the last, you know.

Again the drum-beat was heard, ningled with the shrill notes of the fife; the soldiers were marching down the street, and he must go, but oh, who can tell of the love, the pain, the grief. the tears mingled with that parting,or the agony it cost poor Annie to take her arms from off his neck, to feel him putting her away, to hear him going from the room, across the threshold, down the walk, through the gate, and know that he was gone.

As a child in peril instinctively turns to the mother who it knows has never failed to succor, so Annie turned to God, and with a moaning cry for help sink on her knees just where George had left her. Burying her face in the lounge, she prayed that He who heareth even the raven's cry would care for her husband, and bring him home again if that could be. So absorbed was she as not to hear the gate's sharp click, nor the footstep coming up the walk. Impelled by something he could not resist, George had paused just by the garden fence, and yielding to the impulse which said he must see Annie's face once more, he stole softly to the open door, and stood gazing at her as she knelt, her hands clasped together, and her face hidden from his view, as she

prayed for him. "Will the kind Father keep my George from peril, if it can be, but if, oh, God, how can I say it? if he must die, teach him the road to Heaver

That was what she said, and George, listening to her, felt as if it were an angel's presence in . which he stood. He could not disturb her. She was in safer hands than his, and he would rather leave her thus,-would rather think of her when far away just as he saw her lest, kneeling in her desolation and

praying for him.
"It will help to make me a better man," he said, and brushing aside the great tears swimming in his eyes, he left his angel Annie, and went on his way to battle.

Just off from Rockland's main street. and in a cottage more humble than that of George Graham, the sun shone on another parting,-on Widow Simms giving up her boys, and straining every nerve to look composed, and keep back the maternal love throbbing so madly at her heart. Rigid as if cut in stone were the lines upon her foreliead and around her mouth, as she bustled about, doing everything exactly as it should be done, and coming often to where Isaac sat trying to look unconcerned and whistling "Dixie" as he pulled on the soft, warm pair of socks she had sat up nights to knit him. Eli and John had some, too, snugly tucked away in their bundle, but Isaac's were different. She had ravelled her own lamb's wool stockings for the material composing his, for Isaac's feet were tender; there were marks of chilbiains on them; they would become sore and swollen from the weary march, and his mother would not be there with sooth ing lint and ointment made from the blue poke-berries. Great pains had the widow taken with her breakfast that morning, preparing each son's favorite dish and bringing out the six china cups and damask cloth, part of her grand-mother's bridal dower. It was a very tempting table, and John and Eli tried to eat, exchanging meaning smiles when they saw their mother put in Isaac's cup the biggest lump of sugar, and the largest share of creamdid not care,—for they, too, loved the fair-haired, smooth-faced boy sipping the yellow coffee he could not drink for the mysterious bunches rising so fast in his throat. The breakfast was over now. Issue was trying on his socks, while Ell and John. know their mother would rather be alone when she said good-bye to her baby, prepared to start, talking quite loud, and keeping up stout courage till the last moment came, when both the tall six-foot young men put around the

To be Continued.

Buttered toast is certainly a cut-and-dried affair. We have no right at once to cause we like to do all things in the best way. There are many little things which to do admirably is to waste both time and cost; and the real question is not so much whether we have done, a given thing as well as possible, as whether we have turned a given quantity of labor to the best account.—John Ruskin.



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