

THE GIRL IN GRAY.

How She Surrendered to a Yankee From Illinois.

It was during the encampment of Confederate veterans that Howard Pearce first saw her. She wore a gray riding habit with a double row of small brass buttons leading up to two black stars on the collar. On her sunny looks a small gray slouch hat rested, tilted just the least bit over one eye. She rode well.

Pearce leaned so far from the window to catch a glimpse of the girl that he almost fell. It was a warm day toward the end of July, and he was not sorry that he had no business on hand that must be rushed.

Evidently the girl in gray had gone to the camp ground, and with Saunders. But Saunders was married—happily married, Pearce hoped. Anyhow he was glad that Saunders was married.

That evening he sat before Captain Saunders' tent, with the captain, his wife and Miss Moore—the girl in gray. To the east of the camp grounds the ridge rose in a gentle slope. To the southwest, seemingly towering just over them, was the mountain.

Pearce's heart beat faster as the thought came to him that 30 years before white tents had marked the foot of the ridge as they did that day. But then they had stretched for miles north and south.

"Captain," he said, turning to Saunders, "it is easier to get up the ridge than it was once. There are no men in blue here tonight."

No, the captain replied, but the sons of some of those men are there, pointing to the company street, in which blue clad figures lounged. Loyal? Without doubt.

The bands, which had united for evening concert, had just struck. The Star Spangled Banner. The air was recognized, a far cry from the tented woods, that said the captain.

That said the girl in gray. "What?" Pearce asked.

"Will you play Dixie after awhile, then?"

"They will yell," she said, looking at him with a bright smile and nodding a confident "You'll see or hear."

And he did. When the national air was finished, there was a brief wait. Then the quick, stirring notes of Dixie started the woods into life with sharp echoes, which were drowned by one long, loud yell.

Pearce looked at the girl to receive an expected "I told you so." But she was not looking at him. Her cheeks were dark with color and her eyes, brightened by excitement, were fixed upon the young men tossing their caps high above the tents and shouting with all their sturdy lung power.

"I wonder," he mused, if she hates the north as she loves the south. When the tumult had ceased, he turned to Saunders.

"Well, captain," he said, "what do you say to that?"

"Of course, they love Dixie," said the captain earnestly. "So do I. But there is no deeper meaning in that cheer than the love of a memory. They are loyal."

Miss Moore said that she must go back to town.

As it is late I will have to leave my horse with you, captain. I shall send for him tomorrow. I reckon I can walk to the train in this rig.

She looked down somewhat doubtfully at her riding skirt. Pearce said that he would be glad to go with her, and though it was not apparent in just what way he could overcome the disadvantage of the long dress, she seemed to be grateful for his escort.

Well, that was the beginning of it, and the end is not yet. An incident that occurred under a large tree in the old Confederate fort on the mountain may give a hint of the trend of events.

Pearce and Miss Moore were under the tree because it was the shelter nearest when rain suddenly began to fall, and it rained probably because a number of young folks at the city had come up on the mountain to spend a September day which promised in the morning to be pleasant.

Mr. Pearce was not in good humor. He and Miss Moore had separated themselves from the others. One topic of conversation had led to another, which in this instance was a declaration by Mr. Pearce that he was irretrievably in love with Miss Moore and that if she refused to make him happy he should be forever miserable. At a critical stage of this declaration a raindrop kissed the girl's cheek.

Oh, it's going to rain! she cried. The next instant the downpour began, and both rushed through a breach in the earthen wall of the fort to the tree, whose branches, to which the leaves yet clung, offered protection. There they stood in silence for several minutes, she busily brushing raindrops from her hat, which she had taken off, and he watching her moodily.

The silence became oppressive and she glanced at him curiously and apprehensively from under her lashes. He caught the glance and moving toward her, said:

Well? Oh, don't! she exclaimed, starting away, her eyes still fixed upon a ribbon with which she was working. Why, Katherine—er—Miss Moore—Oh, you mustn't!

He walked to the edge of the circle protected by the leaves and looked out over the clay wall of the fort, down which tiny rivers ran. She, having dried her hat, placed it again on her head and began brushing her skirt, where, here and there, rain had spotted it. She glanced several times at his back, stubbornly turned toward her. He evinced no intention of moving nor of speaking again, and she became nervous. The situation was unbearable, and she exclaimed:

We must get back to the others! We can't very well go through this rain, he said without turning round.

Another prolonged silence, broken only by the monotonous fall of the rain. Finally, when she had almost made up her mind to gather up her skirts and run to the hotel, a quarter of a mile away, he turned and came quickly toward her.

He put out his hand as though to take hers, but she quickly put her hands behind her and stepped back. He folded his arms and stood before her, looking earnestly into the eyes she raised to his almost appealingly.

Katherine, he said, I love you. Will you be my wife? A beautiful color stole slowly from the ribbon at her throat up, and it tinted the edges of her sun-dappled forehead. His

gaze held hers for a moment, then her eyelids fell and their long lashes swept her cheeks.

Mr. Pearce, she said hesitatingly, I am sorry but I—I can't.

Because you do not love me? She looked up quickly into his face and then down again, but she did not reply.

Katherine, tell me, he said. Why is it that you cannot marry me?

Because—she was very busy dislodging a half buried stone with the toe of her shoe—because you are a Yankee!

Another swift glance met his steady look. Then she moved a little farther away and stood half turned from him. His first impulse was to laugh. But that passed almost as it came. The gray, brass buttoned riding habit, the flushed cheeks and bright eyes with which she had listened to Dixie, flashed across his mental vision. The Yankee might be an obstacle not to be laughed away.

But I am not a Yankee, he said with emphasis. I am from Illinois.

It seemed a long time to both that they stood in silence. Again she was the first to speak.

This is an awful rain, she said. Yes, a very wet rain, he replied. Oh, you are going to jest about it.

But I am not jesting, he answered, walking rapidly to where she stood. What I mean is that you will get wet. The water is beginning to drip from the leaves. Here, stripping off his coat, let me put this around you.

Oh, no, she said, stepping back. But you must. The air is chill, and if you get wet you will catch cold.

Put you—you— It won't hurt me a bit. Come!

He assumed a commanding tone, and that or something else accomplished his end, for she made no effort to free herself when he placed the coat about her shoulders. It took a long time to get it fixed just right, and his arm was still around her when he looked into her face and saw that she was looking up into his. Something in her eyes prompted him to draw her close to him and to say very tenderly:

Sweetheart, I come from the north, but I love a southern girl. Don't you think that she can love a northern man just a little—if he is not a Yankee?

She studied the arrangement of his necktie closely, and then transferred her scrutiny to his watch chain. But evidently she was not thinking of either, for when she spoke she asked:

Illinois people aren't Yankees? Certainly not! he replied, with conviction. They are a long way from Yankeeedom—more than 1,000 miles.

She examined the necktie again, looked into his eyes for a moment, then over his shoulder, off into the rain.

(Continued on page three)

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