

his head upon her shoulder and came in the bitterness of his spirit. "Next to loving you, Grace," he said, "this is the heaviest blow I could receive; and to think that he gave his life for me! How can I ever face Mrs. Mayburn?"

But his wife comforted him as only a woman can, and he knew how to soothe and bless; and Mrs. Mayburn saw that he was as sincere a mourner as herself. Moreover, he would not despair of Graham, for though he had been seen to fall, he might only have been wounded and made a prisoner. Thus the bitterness of his grief was mitigated by hope.

This hope was fulfilled in a most unexpected way, by a cheerful letter from Graham himself; and the explanation of this fact requires that the story should return to him.

He thought the sentence of death which he had passed upon himself had been carried into effect. He felt himself falling, and then there had been sudden darkness. Like a dim taper flickering in the night, the spark of life began to kindle again. At first he was conscious of but one truth—that he was dead. Where he now was, in this world or in some other, he did not know; but the essential ego, Alford Graham, had not ceased to exist. The light filled him with a dull, wondering glow. Memory slowly revived, and its first impression was that he was to die. He had died, and yet he was not dead.

As a man's characteristic traits will assert themselves, he lay still and slowly tried to comprehend it all. Suddenly a strange, horrid sound smote on his senses, and froze his blood to death. It must be life after death, for only his mind appeared to have any existence. He could not move. Again the unearthly sound, which could not be a human shriek, was repeated; and by half-involuntary and desperate effort he started up and looked around. The scene at first was secure, confused, and awful. His eyes did not explain it, and he instinctively reached out his hands; and through the sense of touch all that had happened came back to his confused brain. He first felt of himself, passed his hand over his forehead, his body, his limbs; then his awakening intelligence moaned, since it accorded with his belief that life and the body were inseparable. Then he felt around him in the darkness, and his hands touched the grassy field. This fact righted him speedily. In the old fable, when he touched the earth he was strong. He next noted at his head rested on a smooth rock at some but little above the plain, and that he must have fallen upon it. He got up and looked around; and as the air gradually resumed its action after a terrible shock, the situation became intelligible. The awful sounds that he had heard came from a wounded horse that was struggling feebly in the light of the rising moon, now in her last quarter. He was upon the scene of last evening's conflict, and the dim, obscure objects that lay about him were the bodies of the dead. Yes, and there before him were the two men he had killed; and their presence brought such strong sense of repugnance and horror that he sprang to his feet and recoiled away.

He looked around. There was not a living object in sight except the dying horse. The night wind moaned about him, and sighed and sighed as if it were a living creature mourning over the scene. It became clear to him that he had been left as dead. Yes, and he had been robbed, too; for he shivered, and knew that his coat and vest were gone, his hat, his money, his watch and his boots. He walked unsteadily to the bridge, and where he had left his faithful men, all was dark and silent. With a great throb of joy he remembered that Hillard must have sped across that bridge to safety, while he had expiated his evil thought. He then returned and circled around the place. He was evidently alone;

but the surprise occurred to him, that the Confederates would return in the morning to bury their dead, and if he would escape he must act promptly. And yet he could not travel in his present condition. He must at least, have a hat, coat and boots. His only resource was to take them from the dead; but the thought of doing so was horrible to him. Reason about it as he might, he drew near their silent forms with an uncontrollable repugnance. He almost gave up his purpose, and took a few hasty steps away, but a thorn pierced his foot and taught him his folly. Then his imperious will asserted itself, and with an imprecation on his weakness he returned to the nearest silent form, and took from it a limp felt hat, a coat and a pair of boots, all much the worse for wear; and having arrayed himself in these, started on the trail of the Union force.

He had not gone over a mile when, on surmounting an eminence, he saw by dying fires in a grove beneath him that he was near the bivouac of a body of soldiers. He hardly hoped they could be a detachment of Union men; and yet the thought that it was possible led him to approach, stealthily within ear-shot. At last he heard one patrol speak to another in an unmistakably Southern accent, and he found that the enemy was in his path.

Silently as a ghost he stole away, and sought to make a wide detour to the left, but soon lost himself hopelessly in a thick wood. At last, wearied beyond mortal endurance, he crawled into what seemed the obscurest place he could find, and lay down and slept.

The sun was above the horizon when he awoke, stiff, sore and hungry, but refreshed, rested. A red squirrel was barking at him derisively from a bough near, but no other evidences of life were to be seen. Sitting up he tried to collect his thoughts and decide upon his course. It at once occurred to him that he would be missed, and that pursuit might be made with hounds. At once he sprang to his feet and made his way towards a valley, which he hoped would be drained by a running stream. The welcome sound of water soon guided him, and pushing through the underbrush he drank long and deeply, bathed the ugly bruise on his head, and then waded up its current.

He had not gone much over half a mile before he saw through an opening a negro gazing wonderingly at him. "Come here my good fellow," he cried.

The man approached, slowly, cautiously.

"I won't hurt you," Graham resumed; "Indeed you can see that I'm in your power. Won't you help me?"

"Dunno, Mas'r," was the non-committal reply.

"Are you in favor of Lincoln's men or the Confederates?"

"Dunno, Mas'r. It 'pends."

"It depends upon what?"

"On whedder you's a Linkum man or 'Federate."

"Well, then, here's the truth. The Lincoln men are your best friends, if you've sense enough to know it; and I'm one of them. I was in the fight off there, yesterday, and am trying to escape."

"O golly! I've sense enough," and the genial gleam of the man's ivory was an omen of good to Graham. "But," queried the negro, "how you wear 'Federate coat and hat?"

"Because I was left for dead, and mine were stolen. I had to wear something. The Confederates don't wear blue trousers like these."

"Dat's so; an' I knows yer-by yer talk and look. I knows a 'Federate well as I does a coon. But deso yer's mighty ticklish times an' a nigger hab no show ef he's foun' meddlin'. What's yer-gwine ter do?"

"Perhaps you can advise me. I'm afraid they'll put hounds on my trail."

"Dat dey will, if dey misses yer."

"Well, that's the reason I'm here in the stream. But I can't keep this up long. I'm tired and hungry. I've heard

that you people befriended Lincoln's men. We are going to win, and now's the time for to make friends with those who will soon own this country."

"Oh come, you're a gwine ter win. Linkum is de Moses we're all a lookin' for. At all our meetings we're prayin' for him and to him. He's de Lord's right han' to lead we all's out ob bondage."

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