

CARDROME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

BY ANNA C. MINOUE  
CHAPTER XXVI

The sun was several hours high when Clay Powell came within sight of the tall cedars and pine trees that shaded the broad lawn of Willow-wild. The horse's step was weary, and the beautiful black neck and shapely head were drooped dejectedly, for he had travelled hundreds of miles in the past weeks.

"A few more steps and you will find rest and food, my good horse," said the master, as he caught sight of the familiar evergreens. And then, from a narrow lane, a company of home guards poured into the road before him. A sudden paleness showed under the bronze of Powell's face. He leaned low over the horse's black neck. "Kyrat!" he called, somewhat soothingly, but with a note of command thrilling his tones. The horse started, lifted his head, stopped. The master bent lower, passed his right hand along the glossy neck, even until it reached the smooth cheek, and said: "Kyrat, my beautiful! never had man horse like you, since the steed whose name you bear lay down to die in the shadow of his master's tent in Koor-distan! Look, there on the road before us they walk, my enemies. Yonder, home, my master trusts his life to you! Once more, your feet must save him! One dash, my Kyrat, and we are safe. Ho, Kyrat!"

The horse was now trembling with mad impatience. As the last words fell on his ears and he felt the slight pressure of the knees against his ebony sides, he made a wild leap to the right. It carried him over the fence. He shot across the level pasture land, his steel-shod feet striking the earth with a noise that came to the ears of the advancing men like the sound of distant thunder. For one moment they paused, watching horse and rider. "The devil's in that horse!" cried one; while the leader shouted: "The rat's making for its hole! To Willow-wild! and the one that can reach the gate before him gets all the money."

"And vindictive?" "He yain't lame, but dat's all de diffence dah's a'tween 'em. Day's bote played out, sub."

Clay Powell set his teeth in a determined line. There was no escape. All that was left for him was to meet his fate like a soldier and a gentleman.

"The Georgetown home guards are coming to take me prisoner," he said, calmly to the negro. "You must find Mr. Davidson and tell him what has happened to me." Here a terrific knocking sounded on the hall door. "They have come. Go and answer them," he concluded, leaning back in his chair and lifting his eyes to the marble bust of Shakespeare which surmounted one of the exquisitely carved bookcases.

Job obeyed the command; but as his eyes fell on the company the inherent insolence of the negro returned. He stood holding the door, and after a moment's silence, during which he treated the leader of the guards to a contemptuous survey, he asked: "Yoh want to see somebody?" "None of your pertness here, you imp!" shouted the leader. "We've come for that man."

"Oh, yoh want to see Mistah Davidson's son?" questioned Job. "Yoh'll find 'im in de rest, sah," and he made a move as if to close the interview at the door. "Do you want me to lay this across your brass black face?" cried the man, lifting his riding-whip. "I surely do not, sah," said Job, not at all intimidated, however. "But who's yoh mean we'n yoh say 'dat man'?" "Dah yain't but two men on dis place, me an' Mistah Davidson's man," and Job's face was like an ebony mask.

"Gentleman, then. Do you understand?" but the cutting irony of the voice was lost upon Job, whose face brightened as he said: "See? Mistah Davidson's yoh want to see? Sorry, sah, but Mistah Davidson yain't at home, an' we doan know 'w'en to spee' 'im. Good-mawrin'," and he stepped back as though he considered the business was despatched; but the man, with an oath, crossed the threshold, and shouted: "You know who I mean well enough, you d—n nigger! and if you don't tell your master to come here, and if he doesn't come when I send for him, I'll search this house from cellar to garret; and if I can't find him, I'll smoke him out, like a rat out of his hole. Clay Powell is here, and I'll not leave without him, whether I take him with me dead or alive."

Job stood undisturbed under the wild talk, and when the words ceased from sheer want of breath, he said, in the even tones of the perfect servant: "Yoh want to see Cuh'nel Powell? Yes, sah, he's in. Dis way, please, sah," and with ceremony he conducted the company to the parlor. He then stepped to the straight, still figure in the tall-backed chair: "Cuh'nel Powell, some pusses in de pablah to see yuh," and Howard Dallas, who was one of the number of "pusses" felt an insane longing to order the insolent negro shot where he stood. Powell rose and advanced to the parlor, now filled with armed men. He had carefully arranged his dress before calling to see Virginia, and save for a light coating of dust, the gray uniform set off with its fine gold trimmings looked fresh and as if it were with the grace of the ideal soldier. He paused at the doorway and looked over his visitors without a glance of recognition for one, and under his eyes the rude grew angry, the fine-grained, ashamed. He continued to look on them in that proud silence until the leader said:

"We've come to take you to jail. Better give yourself up without any trouble. We've got you completely caged, for all your good running." He treated the speaker to a glance then, as though he had not heard the words, said: "I suppose I see before me the Georgetown Guards? I may be absolved from venging, if I conclude that I must indeed have a name for prowess and daring when it was thought necessary to send out the entire force to capture me," and for an instant the rare smile lighted the handsome face. "But I have no desire to detain you longer," he said. "If there is a gentleman in the crowd will he please come forward, as I desire to give myself up to him?"

"We have another prisoner to take," said Dallas, "that negro boy He is a runaway slave of Judge Todd's."

"He is not," said Clay Powell, calmly turning toward the speaker. "He was given by Judge Todd to Miss Castleton, who immediately set the boy free. My statement can be proven by the papers in the office of the clerk of Scott County."

"But he is to be arrested!" cried Howard Dallas, pale with anger. "By whose authority and upon what charge?" demanded Powell. "Show me your authority and prove his offence. Unless these are forthcoming, a freeman can not be deprived of his liberty."

"He is enlisted against the Federal Government, which we have sworn to defend," blazed Howard Dallas.

"That is false, and you know it!" cried Powell. "The arms of the Confederacy are not and will never be borne by the negro. In its struggle for independence, 'The Southern white man and the black never have stood, and never will stand, on the plane of equality, which that would imply. We leave that to you, sir! The negro was Lieutenant Todd's serving-man. Nothing more. To arrest him is a flagrant violation of every human right."

Howard Dallas deliberately turned his back on the speaker and said to the men standing near the door: "Go and arrest that negro and take him to Georgetown jail!" And the men obeyed.

CHAPTER XXVII  
After their surrender as prisoners of war, General Morgan and his officers were sent to the Ohio penitentiary.

The days of that long summer passed wearily for the gallant leader of gallant men. At length, hope of exchange began to grow weak, and he determined to take the matter of his liberation in his own hands. When he unfolded his intention to his loyal soldiers they entered into it with enthusiasm. Many plans of escape were brought forward and discussed during those rare intervals when they found themselves relieved of the presence of the suspicious warden; but each one was abandoned, until the daring Captain Hines originated the scheme of tunnelling a way to freedom. At first sight it seemed to be too stupendous a work to be ever made possible, but Hines had used advantageously his Irish wit and intellect. He had noticed the dryness of their cells, which were on the first floor; seeking a reason for this, he concluded that under this range there must be an air-chamber. This belief was later confirmed by the warden, who, in answer to the soldier's carelessly asked questions, gave much valuable information regarding the superstructure of the prison. Then for many days Captain Hines lived almost entirely in his cell, deeply interested, when the warden appeared, in the study of French, with his head resting on an old carpet-bag that was thrown carelessly on the floor. But as the steps died on the corridor the bag would be removed, and while one kept watch, the Captain and a few companions would begin again their interrupted digging into the hard floor with knives which had been stolen from the table. A passage into the air-chamber below was cut from Hines' cell, and then the daring soldiers found themselves opposed by a wall of stone three feet thick. Morgan's officers had never been daunted by a difficulty; a block of stone could not conquer them; so, while above, their chief would engage the warden in long conversations and spirited discussions on criminals and the mode of punishment, below, his men, in companies of twos and threes, chiselled with their steel knives, until at length the cement gave way and several of the stones were removed. This brought them to the bank of earth, and here their simple tools were unavailable.

"Suppose we abstract a few spoons?" suggested Hal one night, as he sat in Captain Hines' cell. As the words were uttered, the face of the warden peered in upon the group of four sitting in the dim gaslight. Hal's back was to the door and Hines faced it. Without the faintest indication that he had caught sight of the man in the shadow without, the Captain broke into a merry laugh as he said:

"For a person who claims to have some knowledge of the English language, you make a poor attempt, Hal, at translating French into your mother tongue! Whoever heard of 'abstracting spoons'?"—unless, indeed, from a Yankee general making a pillaging tour through the South! Put up your paper and take this piece of advice: abandon the study of French. Nature never fashioned you for a linguist."

Though they realized that the warden was without, none of the Confederates moved a muscle. "What's the matter with my English?" demanded Hal, bruskiy. "Listen to read from a paper on his knees?" The thief said to his companions, "Suppose we abstract a few spoons, that is," Hal went on to explain with great care, "suppose we separate them from the family plate and carry them away. I ask you, gentlemen, lifting and replacing, as it were, a notebook in his pocket, if that is not as correct English as Captain Hines speaks. You seem to forget, Captain, that I am a graduate of Yale."

"And I," said Captain Hines, "carried off first honors at Cambridge!" "Oh!" broke from the three listeners, and the exclamation was followed by a laugh, during which the warden passed on.

"Great God!" muttered Hines. "Do you think he overheard us?" whispered Hal, the beads of perspiration breaking on his pale brow. "To-morrow will tell," replied he, and with heavy hearts the friends separated.

The next morning, as usual, Captain Hines was seated on the floor, one elbow resting on the carpet-bag, his French book in his hand, when the warden entered on his tour of inspection. He greeted the prisoner gruffly, adding, in tones that struck fear across the heart of his listener: "That must be a very interesting book you've got there."

"Why?" asked the Captain, carelessly, resting the book on one knee, one finger marking the passage he had been reading.

"Takes you such a 'farnal long time to get through with it!" he exclaimed. "For a month or more I've found you sitting here on the floor every morning with that self-same book in your hand. Seems to me you ought to have finished it before this, even if you had to spell your way through."

"Examine this book, warden," said Hines, holding the volume toward him, "and then tell me how long it would take you to finish reading it." The warden took the book, glanced at the pages, and said: "I don't know anything about that lingo."

"Like you, I am unfamiliar with the French language," said Captain Hines, "but I am desirous of becoming acquainted with that tongue. It is a good way to pass some of the time, which, you understand, hangs heavily on my hands." The warden grunted, but it was evident that his suspicions were aroused.

"What's in that carpet-bag that you always keep it under your elbow?" he asked abruptly. Captain Hines drew himself up and said, with a half laugh: "Ah, warden, you're a sharp fellow! Nothing escapes you. The 'powers that be' know what they were doing when they made you jailer here. I felt that, sooner or later, you would discover my secret. Now, I am going to make a bargain with you. If you don't tell the boys on me, I will show you my reason for guarding my carpet-bag. Just look down the corridor to see if there is any one around."

As the unsuspecting man went to the door, Captain Hines dexterously took a flask of whiskey from the carpet-bag, which he instantly replaced over the hole in the stone floor. "Take a drink of this," said the Captain, "and you'll know why I am so careful of my sack. If the boys knew I had that—well, I wouldn't have it!" and he laughed lightly.

The warden availed himself of the invitation, and said, with his nearest approach to a smile: "Such medicine as this ought to help your digestion, and be reluctant to hold the bottle toward its owner." "Have some more," said Hines courteously, and the warden complied.

He chatted for a few minutes longer, and when the door closed behind him, Hines gave a sigh of relief. When Hal and his other friends learned how effectively the warden's suspicions had been allayed their hopes were revived, though their practical work was delaying their work, and with each day the possibility of discovery increased. One morning as Hal was waiting his turn at the long washing trough that stood in the prison yard, his sharp eyes noted an old broken spade that was lying near by.

"It's plainly a gift of Providence!" exclaimed Hines, when Hal told him, after breakfast, about the spade. "You must bring it to us from the yard to-morrow. How? Oh! you will have to manage that part of the campaign yourself. The commander gives only the orders to his subordinates."

Hal set with his head on his hands for a long time. Then he sought the company of the younger portion of the prisoners; after which he appeared to lose interest in all things mundane, as he began to develop symptoms of a severe cold. The next morning he complained of feeling too ill to go to breakfast; but the warden was inexorable, and ordered the young lieutenant, in unmistakable language, to fall into line.

"Corporal," Hal cried to a man of ample proportions, "will you loan me your overcoat? I've got a weak chest, and one blast of this ugly Ohio wind will send me to an untimely grave."

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city, and walked over to the washing-trough, with a frown on his usually smiling face. A close observer would have noticed that the great coat was buttoned now, and that when he walked, Lieutenant Todd carried his right arm pressed closely against his breast. He sat very straight at the breakfast table. But all attributed his manner of walking and his stiff posture to his indisposition or to the bruises he had received. As he was leaving the breakfast hall the warden approached the young man and tapped him on the shoulder. Hal felt his face grow cold, but the place was dark and the sharp eyes did not notice the white of betrayal.

TO BE CONTINUED

LOST TREASURE

Grace Keon in The Ave Maria.

The dream was over, but with its going Susan's life had hung in the balance. Skill, the wonderful skill which science has attained, saved her. She came back out of the shadowland to life, but not to its joy; to the habit of existence without its hope. No one among her own, save her husband, had dreamed that Susan could feel so intensely. Her sisters, Mrs. Meade and Mrs. Carter, were astonished. It was too bad about the child; but, then, they had kept Susan! For when Susan turned from them, searching for that which she had lost, and nearly—oh, very nearly—finding it, only then had they realized what Susan meant to them all.

"As for the baby, she will not miss it; she has never had it," they said. Susan would have laughed in pure mockery if she heard these words. But, seated in her low wicker chair on the sunny porch, a thick shawl about her, and the glory of her garden stretching before her eyes, she heard nothing, said nothing; she lived her own inner life, and kept all others shut out from her. John Harrison was heartbroken.

"Talk to her, make her talk to you," said Father Perry, of St. Anne's. "Father Perry who had offered his daily Mass for her (during that troubled week in which her life hung by a single thread. "Let her rid herself of this brooding spirit by putting words to her thoughts. They tried hard enough, Father Perry himself and her husband. But in the middle of a sentence Susan would pause and her eyelids droop wearily. After that she would say nothing.

"What could stand it no longer, John Harrison went to Dr. Phelps. "She's not getting well," he said abruptly. "She must get well," he added, with clenched hands. "Well—" Dr. Phelps looked thoughtful. "I'll see."

"When?" asked John Harrison. "To-day," he answered. "I'll go out to-day." He kept his word. Reaching the gate he had grown to know so well during the past few months, he opened it quietly. Susan sat up, he was pleased, wondering. Then he saw pleasure—her eyes were fastened on the cool green beauty stretching before her.

He went up the steps and stood beside her. Even then she did not see him. "Mrs. Harrison," he said. "O Dr. Phelps! Good afternoon!" She was not surprised in any way. "Feeling better?" "Ever so much. A little tired, but that is nothing."

He took the empty chair beside her and picked up her hand, holding practiced fingers on her pulse. He did not speak. At last he put her hand back on her knee, and swung about, looking down the garden path. "Mrs. Harrison," he said sharply, "what do you see down there?" She started. A pink flush touched her cheek. He felt that he had roused her. His eyes met hers. "You must tell me," he said. "No, don't look away. Listen! There never was any hope, never, unless God chose to work a miracle; and, for some wise purpose of His own, He didn't."

"You mean—my baby?" Her fingers met suddenly and clung together. He nodded. "You see, He did work one miracle. You were able to have it baptized. That was a wonderful thing. Had it lived—by any possible chance had it lived—in heaven. Which would you choose, if the choice was yours?" "Oh, I know!" she breathed. "And I try so hard!" But— "Her eyes drifted back to the garden. He felt that he had lost the thread. But he persisted.

"Come!" His voice was stern. "You have not told me what you see." She did not answer. "Tell me!" he urged. A frown of annoyance curved her brows. That stern voice hurt, but it compelled an answer. "I see a little child," she said. "He is playing in my garden. He builds houses of stones and pebbles. Her voice died off dreamily, and now she spoke as if all this were but a dream. "Once in a while he tires of his play, and lies down—beside the road. And his hair—his hair is a patch of light on the ground. He sits up, rubbing his eyes. Oh, they are so blue, so bright! They are like stars!"

She was trembling. "You are satisfied to sit here watching him?" His tones were gentle now, very, very gentle. "Yes, I think so. Some day, when my feet can bear my weight, I am going down to him. I can not do so yet."



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