

he began to canter—no longer towards the east, but towards the north—and the lake—and Bess!

Soon the second cavalier came also to the crossing of the forest-ways, watch in hand, with eyes turning from heights to corduroy bearing north.

"Good heaven!" said he, in a low tone, "the Colonel probably thinks I read the heavens. I do not, but only my watch, which plainly has no moon in to rise at any time. Harvey has put it so, in order to make me return immediately, since I am uncertain; and, if I fail, Harvey will shoot me. I have reckoned some on being shot by Yankees to-night, but before this happy event I should like to see Bess—to tell her a certain something. My faith, Harvey, I should prefer some other would shoot me. But let us ride—to Bess!"

The sun was completely hidden now, and shadows blended and deepened and crossed phantastically. Nevertheless, our second cavalier made shift in starting to catch sight of certain marks upon the soft soil beneath the foliage. There he saw trampled grass and the impress of ironed hoofs. Whether or not he too was white, it being nearly dark, there is no certainty. But into the silent, abbey-like forest on every hand rang a hoarse cry straightway—wild, echoing, like an oath. This admirable rider's mount did not canter—it galloped, flying and pattering, making a multiplicity of rapping sounds, as of some terrible hail. On and on he crashed, bending low, gazing fire-eyed into the vista of the highway.

It was at this time that a young girl of eighteen, dark-eyed and light of foot, paused with hand on heart at the edge of a little clearing whence she could see for some distance into the road. A sound of cantering hoofs was registering a sharp tattoo in the soft heart of her. Her eyes were wide and suggested tears, ready, but as yet unlet.

"Ah! that is Cavers on his dear

Duke. I thought—oh! he is spurring faster. What has happened? There has been no firing. Can it be—?"

But she had not concluded all her broken soliloquies ere the long Lincoln sabre was clanking towards her, first upon the corduroy and then upon the sod.

When they spoke her graceful form was close to his great breast and the gallant mount was pawing fretfully about the trail.

"Dear Bess," said the cavalier, "I have come to tell you a thing you must know, that I love you. To-night Harvey attacks the Yankees at the Fifty. The most of us will be shot, we think. Would Little Bess care then?"

Slowly her hands went up towards his great shoulders; hot came her troubled tears; pathetically trembled her red, arched lips.

"Tell me, Bess, if I do not come again, who, of all Lincoln, will most—?"

Far away towards the south, from depths of forest now black with night, were certain muffled beating sounds, rapid as the crackle of musketry.

"By heavens!" cried her cavalier, "who rides like that at this hour? Little Bess! Those hoof-beats are of Chester's 'Fury.' Not another mare in Lincoln flies like that. Bess, why does *he* come to-night?"

Yes, Chester—famed "Fury" beneath him—bearing down at a frightful pace—sabre pitching—head bared—even now dimly in sight at a turn in the highway!

"Ah! Bess, you do not answer me, and the time is short. Speak!"

The small, soft hands were not quite to his shoulders, and they went no farther.

Angrily he flung her away, caught the bridle of his charger, bounded to the saddle, and dashed off at an angle into the woods beyond the western end of the clearing.

When he no longer heard the rattle of hoofs upon the corduroy from the south he drew rein, wheeled, and rode