

CARDOME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

By ANNA C. MINOGOS CHAPTER XXX

Mr. Davidson and Hal talked far into the night, and the conclusion arrived at from their conversation sent the elder man to Virginia early on the following morning. He found her alone, and notwithstanding the anguish that was racking her heart, calm and silent, setting up the barrier of her fine pride against the approach of even a friend. Impulsive to rashness, his tropical nerved nature made it always difficult for him to deal with Kentuckians, who hide their deeper feelings, true natures, behind light, smiling gaiety, or cold, still pride.

that I shall permit you to go any further with your damnable scheme, for no man's life is worth the price you are asking for it! "Did you not quit your star-gazing a little too soon, Mr. Davidson?" questioned Dallas, his fine, cruel smile accompanying the words. For an instant his hearers face showed surprise, but in the next he was saying, as he advanced a step, eyes and voice threatening: "Repeat that question, if you dare, Howard Dallas, and you will not be here to-morrow to receive Clay Powell's ransom!"

Dallas drew back, pallor showing under the smooth skin a strange, unbecoming fear, as he remembered his father brought home dead from a duel. Mr. Davidson noted the change and smiled; then he said: "I have many duties claiming my time. Will you write out the order for the jailer?"

With no other word, Dallas obeyed and silently handed the paper to Mr. Davidson, who went to where Virginia stood, saying: "I shall call again this afternoon." Then, as he bent over her hand, he added in a whisper: "Remember you are dealing with a villain in yonder man. Listen to my words and obey them as you would your father's. Do not, under any circumstances, under any pressure, under any threat, under any promise, marry him until Clay Powell's note, telling you that he is safe in Frankfort, is in your hands; nay, not until your eyes have read the words and your mind is fully convinced they are no forgery." Then with a bow to Dallas, he left the room.

When they were alone, the young man raised his eyes from the contemplation of the table to the woman standing by the chair, her face and attitude haughtily demanding why he should thus linger in her presence. He was not quite certain of her. He could not grasp the full meaning of that still, immovable scorn. One interview he had had with her, the day following her return to Georgetown in answer to his letter; and in his better moments, remembrance of that interview shamed Howard Dallas into a blush. But those moments were rare, of swift passage. One had come that morning as he had turned to her with his first question, and her reception of it had awakened all the piteousness of his nature, which had not been modified by his after passage at arms with Mr. Davidson. He thought as he looked at her that he would give much to write one expression of the pain in her soul from those curved lips, catch one signal of her pride's defeat from that still, cold face. He hardly knew how to attack her, she was so unlike other women; but as he watched her, he suddenly recalled the night of the fête at Mrs. Powell's when she had refused to walk alone with him to the little summer retreat. She was alone with him now, willing or unwilling, as she would be hereafter when he wished; and she would hear him now, but not as she would have heard him then. He rose and deliberately crossed the room to where she stood, and though she never moved a hair's breadth, he felt her mad desire for flight, and it made him smile.

"My Virginia," he began slowly, to give the words all their dread meaning, "you hate me so thoroughly I could love you for it. A woman's hate is almost as intoxicating as her love—when she is ours. You will not let me touch your hand to day, I will kiss your lips, my proud one, without your permission, to-morrow." "But this is not to-morrow!" she said. "God's night lies between. In it He may send me release from a life more dreaded than a thousand years of His severest punishment. And if He should deem me worthy of thus receiving His mercy, you shall not think, looking on my dead face, that living I bore one insulting word from you. This I have to say to you, as your wife, you may insult me. I shall be the first to resist to prevent it. I would scorn to attempt to prevent it, for no one, not my mother if she were living, shall know that Virginia Castleton was an unwilling bride. But I am yet mistress of myself. While I am, I shall not permit you even to stand in my presence, much less offer me insult. Now go!" she finished, pointing toward the door, "and immediately, or I shall not hesitate to call my servants and bid them thrust you from this house, even though you are coming back to it to-morrow to claim me for your wife!"

The smile left his eyes and mouth, and with an expression on his face that would have struck dead the heart of a woman cast in a less courageous mold, he turned to find the grinning Mandy barring his way. "What are you doing here, you eaves-dropping slave?" he cried. "I am not a slave, I want you to remember, Mista Dallas! I see a free pesson, an' jus' as good as yoh is. Yoh didn't ust to 'jest to my envas-droppin' w'en I wuz a slave at Cah-dome, nuz atah you 'duded me to run away from ole Marse wif ma blue-gum niggab, w'en de eaves-droppin' wuz on Misa 'Ginia. Some-times, Mista Dallas, de knife wuz spen's a heap of time a-makin' sharp is jus' de one 'dat cuts out hah. Yain't dat so?" "Get out of here!" he cried, "or—"

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"Yoh's mighty glad, yain't yoh, mammy?" he cried. "But I know something dat yoh'd give yoh face, dat makes everybody skeer'd of yoh, to hear. Oh-h, don't I know something good! An' ole Mis' would giv hah head to know it, too. Oh-h!" "For a long time he fantasized her with hints of his wonderful secret until she began to get angry, when her face took on an expression that would have made nearly every negro for miles around quail; but her son only grinned and said: "Yoh's not so glad now, mammy, is yoh?" "Yoh's mad, an' yoh'll be maddah a-foh I tell you w'at I know." She bounded toward him, and it seemed that the inherited savagery of innumerable generations of wild man tearing through her would make her rend him; but he sat unmoved, only saying: "I can bite, yoh know!" She recoiled, and then began to make mysterious passages through the air with her hands. At this he laughed and said: "I yain't afeard of yoh 'hoodoo, mammy. Yoh said yoh 'hoodoo'd ole Marse Powell an' speered w'ay all his money; but it wuz dat wine yoh ust to giv 'im. Den he'd giv ole Mis' his money; an' yoh'd take it an' hide it up de chimney. Den w'en we wuz all leavin' Willow-wild, w'en ole Marse wuz dead, yoh an' Misses went an' egot de money an' bring it ovah here. Den you said yoh 'hoodoo'd Mista Walter Powell an' speered his wife away, an' yoh know yoh put groun' glass in hah bikits w'en yoh went down to nuss here, an' yoh 'yink nobody don't know dis, an' yoh say dat yoh can 'hoodoo' everybody, an' make all de things skeer'd of yoh. But Chloe Todd, she know w'at yoh done, an' so's Aunt Charity, an' so's Mandy; an' ole folk an' cullobed people. An' sometimes, mammy, dey's gwian to tell w'at dey know. Den dey wuz ole yoh whipped or make ole Mis' sell yoh, foh yoh ain't a slave no more; but dey'll carry yoh out to jail an' hanc yoh like dey does wicket w'ite men. Oh, mammy, dah yain't anybody w'at can save yoh den. An' w'en yoh's dead, de good Lawd'll say, 'Yoh's be a bad niggab! Go down to hell hah!"

POOR LITTLE JOE!

A True Story by Mercedes, in St. Xavier's Journal. Not many months ago, a kindly friend, a priest of many years, told this pathetic story to a little crowd who surrounded him, as he sat on the long porch at St. Xavier's, looking out on the old trees of the grove and the green lawns that bordered the carriage way. We will give the story in his own words. It will certainly go to the hearts of all who read it. He said: "One day as I was passing along the streets of New York in the Italian quarter I met a very small, bright lad, whose olive skin and black, curly hair, together with his sparkling eyes, proclaimed at once his nation's name or ton, but his precocity was evident; and a certain shrewdness in the expression of his mouth showed that already he was making his way in life as a bread winner. He had a kit for blacking boots under his arm and the way he pulled off his cap showed he recognized the Roman collar. His frank fearless smile attracted me, and I put my arm around his shoulder and began

a chat with him. Before I left him he promised to come up to the house. He promised so readily that I said half doubtfully: "Now, my son, can I depend on you?" "Father," he said, "I always keep my word; that's the only good thing I do, but it's business to keep your word." "I smiled, and as I went my way I thought how uncanny and premature the answer was for such a little chap. All day he was on my mind, however; I grew absolutely anxious as 5 o'clock drew near. I was even at the door of the church when the last stroke of 5 echoed on the air, my little Italian turned the corner and doffing his cap bounded up the steps. I shook hands with him heartily and led him into the church which was empty. We sat down in the last pew and I began to instruct him for confession. There was not a shadow of hesitancy or human respect in the lad's make up; he had led a hard life. He fairly startled me by his knowledge of wickedness, his honest avowal of sin when I showed him the horrible wickedness of sin which he did not seem before to realize, that I gave him absolution and persuaded him to come again and prepare for his First Communion. He told me a pitiful tale of his life and when he finally promised to come, I knew he meant to do better. He came regularly, and after a time made his First Holy Communion. I persuaded him to this one belief, that God loved him tenderly and would always keep His arms around him, if he kept good. "After his first Communion he vanished; and although I sent scouts in every direction he could not be found. I was in distress, for the lad had gone to my heart. I never saw a boy of mine so sharp and clever, yet so docile and so truthful. No matter what he did, it was out, on a moment's question. His falls were due to his environment, and I was casting about to get him better quarters, if I could only find him. At last I met him squarely, one day in the street. He did not hang his head or run away, but off with his cap and looked me honestly in the eyes. He spoke first: "Father, I've been bad and I was ashamed to come back!" "He was so small for his age that his head scarcely reached my elbow, but I put my arm around him. "Well fix that, son," I said. "Come along with me, and you can tell me all about yourself." "It's a bad tale, Father," said this little philosopher, "but I've tried my best and had to give up. No feller can be good where I live." "We walked on to the rectory and my heart ached for the lad. He was a masterpiece of sin. Morality, decency, honesty were mocked at in his surroundings, and he was honestly grieved about it. He was naturally good and tried to do right and I knew he told the truth. I talked to him and he was very willing to go to confession and promised to go to Communion next day. He stayed a long time in the church before the altar of the Sacred Heart; his face had a beautiful expression when he said "Good by," and I resolved that no matter what I should pass without making an effort to rescue him from his surroundings. After he had gone about a square I saw from the window that he was bounding back. "Father," he said, "I'm an honest boy, and I never lie; I want to tell you that I am going to run away from home. I can't keep from committing sins, when I'm there and I won't go back. I won't go home again. I want the Sacred Heart to believe in me. You said it loved me. I'll get along somehow with the fellers, and I won't commit any more sins." "He looked very small as he stood there, his cap in his hand, his dark eyes fixed on my face. This time he was bound to do right. "But, son," I said, "you must not run off. You are too small and young to look out for yourself; I want you to go home, and I place you in the hands of God. Go home with my blessing." "If you say that, father, and place me in God's hands with your blessing, it's a go—it has to be right; only I feel now as if I'd rather die than commit another sin." "And he went whistling down the street. "I looked for him at Mass next morning for I wanted to give him his breakfast. He was not there. It saddened me, for he had promised, and he never broke his word. "I went around and inquired for him without avail. A week passed on, another, and the boy did not appear. I was really troubled about him. I started out to look for him and happened to meet a chum of his in the street. The boy seemed unwilling to speak to me. I had to hold him, until I said I was looking for Joe. "You won't find him," said the younger briefly. "Why?" said I. "He's dead!" was the reply. "Dead?" I exclaimed. "Dead? When did he die?" "Oh, he died two weeks ago! He died that afternoon he was at confession. He was telling me about it when he died. He said he was bound to be good now, and wanted to run off, but you said he must go home. God would take care of him." "And to my shocked and grieved questions, I found out that little Joe had met this boy who ran an elevator in some store. They were in the cage together, and Joe was telling of