

CLAUDIA TYACK'S ORDEAL.

Claudia Tyack was the tallest and handsomest man of my time at Harvard. And when I saw him walking one day with Elsie Marple through the college square, I felt really and truly jealous about her.

Those were the dear old days before the war, and Prof. Marple then taught Greek to Freshmen and Sophomores in Cambridge-halls. Elsie was still the belle of Cambridge, and I was Elsie's devoted admirer. But that afternoon when I met Elsie a little later, alone, by the old Law School, near the Azarias Mausoleum, I was half angry and half sorry to see her.

"I spoke roughly, I suppose. I was young and I was angry. Elsie turned her big brown eyes upon me open, more and said only, 'I'm very sorry for him. Poor, poor fellow! I'm very sorry.' 'Elsie,' I answered, 'you're no right to speak so about my other fellow. Tyack's been making love to you. I'm sure of that. Why did you let him? You're mine now and I claim the whole of you.'"

To my great surprise, Elsie suddenly burst into tears, and walked away without answering me anything. I was hot and uncomfortable, but I let her go. I didn't even try in any way to stop her, or ask her why she should cry so strangely. I only knew, like a foolish boy as I was, that my heart was full of wrath and resentment against Tyack.

That evening I met him again in the dining-hall. The old hall on the college square that preceded the big memorial building of the Harvard brigade set up long afterwards in honor of the boys who fell in the great struggle. I looked at him angrily and spoke angrily. After that we went together in the cool air. Tyack was flushed and still angrier than I. "You want to triumph over me," he said in a fierce way, as we reached the door. "That is mean and ingenuous. You might do better. In your place I would have more magnanimity."

"I didn't know what on earth he meant, but my hot French blood boiled up at first—Huguenot refrains came over with the first and I answered him. No man calls me mean for nothing. How follows word with men of my sort, Tyack. I can't say again, and you know what you'll get for it."

"You are a fool and a coward," he cried through his clenched teeth. "The gentleman would not treat a conquered rival. Isn't it enough that you have beaten me and crushed me? Need you dance upon me and kick my corpse afterwards?"

"I don't know what I answered back, I failed to understand him still, but I was furious, and I only felt the anger for that; but I struck him in the face, and I told him if he wished it to be open war, he should have it with no quarter."

"I could hardly believe my eyes when he drew himself up to his full height and without uttering a word stalked haughtily off, his face purple with suppressed wrath, and his lips quivering, but self-controlled and outwardly calm in his gait and movement. I thought he must be going to challenge me—in those days duelling was not yet utterly dead even in the north—and I waited for the challenge with some eagerness; but no challenge ever came. I never saw Claude Tyack again till I met him in the second Connecticut Regiment, just before the battle, trembling with excitement, and after our easy American fashion asked at the door to see Miss Elsie. Elsie came down to me alone in the dining-room; her eyes were still a little swollen with crying, but she looked even lovelier and gentler than ever. I asked her what had passed between her and Tyack, and she told me in simple words a story that, angry as I was, sent a thrill of regret and remorse through my inmost being. Tyack had come up to her that afternoon in the Sim Avenue, she said, and after getting leading up to his hints who meaning she never perceived till afterwards, had surprised her at last by asking her outright to be his wife and make him happy forever and ever."

"I was so breathless at the unexpected declaration that she had not even presence of mind to tell him at once of her virtual engagement; and Tyack seeing her hesitate and temporize, went on begging in the profoundest terms of love and affection, till her woman's heart was touched with pity. 'He said he could never know another happy moment,' she whispered, 'unless I would have him, Walter; and as he said it I knew by his eyes that he really meant it.'"

"And what did you answer?" I asked in an agony of doubt, my heart beating wildly for my answer that evening."

"I said to him, 'Oh, Mr Tyack, I know you mean it, and if it weren't that I love Walter Ponsard with all my soul, I think out of very pity I should have to marry you.'"

"You said that," I cried, the devil within me getting the better of me for a moment. "Yes, Walter, I said that. And Mr Tyack gave a sort of low, suppressed, sobbing cry like a man whose heart is thrust through, I think, and pressed his two hands upon his breast and staggered away as if I had shot him."

"Elsie," I cried, taking her white hand in a fit of remorse. "I understand it all now. I hope to heaven we haven't between us, that man Tyack to blow his brains out, or jump into the river." When I got back to my rooms a little past midnight, I found a note lying on my table. This was what it said: 'WALTER PONSARD: You have treated me brutally. No honorable man would act as you have done. Yet, for her sake, I refrain from returning the blow you gave me. But whenever my own

turn comes, without trusting her, trust me, you will find you have provoked a dangerous enemy.

CLAUDIA TYACK. I breathed freer. Then he would not kill himself. I don't mind his threat of vengeance, but I should have been sorry to bear the guilt of his blood upon me. Next morning Tyack had gone from Cambridge, and nobody knew where he had betaken himself."

Just as we were turning in for the night a United States mail was distributed to the detachment. I opened my letter from Elsie with trembling fingers. She wrote as ever, full of tears and hopes. A little post-script ended the letter. It had been written in the privacy of her room in Tyack's division. I shall never cease to be sorry for him. If possible, try and make your quarrel up before battle. I couldn't bear to think he might be killed, and you unfortunate!"

I sat long with the letter in my hand. A battle is a very serious thing. If Tyack had been there in the tent that evening, I think I should have taken Elsie's advice and made it all up with him. And then things would have been very different."

"As I sat there musing with the letter still in my fingers, the drum beat suddenly, and we heard the signal for formation. It was the night surprise: Tyack and Bonaparte were upon us suddenly. Everybody knows that Chhattawanga was like. We fought hard, but the circumstances were against the Harvard battalion. Though Bonaparte held his own in the center to be sure, the right wing had a bad time of it, and seventy-two of us Harvard boys were taken prisoners. I am not writing a history of the war, so I shall only say, without attempting to explain what we were marched off at once to Bonaparte's rear, and sent off at once to Richmond. There we remained for a month, close prisoners, without one word from home, and what to me was ten thousand times worse, without possibility of communicating with Elsie. Elsie, no doubt, would think I was dead. That thought was a perpetual torture to me. Would Tyack take advantage of my absence? Elsie was mine; I knew I could trust her."

"At the end of five months the other men were released on parole. They offered me the same terms, but I refused to accept them. It seemed to me a question of principle. I had pledged my word already to fight to the death for my country, and I couldn't forswear myself by making terms with rebels. We of old New England stock took a serious view of the war, and in meaning, we didn't look upon it as a vast national armed picnic party. Even for Elsie's sake, I would not consent to purchase a useless freedom by what I regarded as a public treachery. I could not have loved Elsie so much, 'loved I not honor more,' as the poet of our common country phrases it."

I was left the only prisoner in the old barracks in Clay street, Richmond, and of course I was accordingly but little guarded. A few weeks later an opportunity occurred for me to get away. A wounded soldier from the front, struggling in himself from the agony of the lousiest sentry, and made my way across the streets of the half-besieged city. I waited till nightfall in the rotunda of the Exchange Hotel in Franklin street, where a man sat and smoked and discussed the news; and when the lamps began to be lighted around the State Capitol, I slunk off along the river side, so as to avoid being hailed and challenged by the sentries, who held all approaches from the direction of Washington."

In those days, I need not hardly say, strong lines of earthworks were drawn around Richmond city on the north, east, and west, where Lee was defending it; and it was only along the river side that any road was left fairly open into the country. I went up the river bank, therefore, onward and onward, till the city lights faded slowly one by one, into the darkness behind me. I passed a few soldiers here and there on the road, but my confederate uniform sufficiently protected me from any unfavorable notice. If any of them halted me with a 'Hallo, stranger! where are you off this time of evening?' my answer was easy. 'Straight from the front, Sick leave. Just discharged from hospital duty, and ordered to my company.' Southern chivalry nodded and passed on without further parley. I was going in fact in the wrong direction for my questions to be asked me in passing. Everybody from the south was hurrying to the front; and I was almost certainly being eyed and attracted by little attention."

I walked on and on, always along the bank of the dark river, till I had almost reached the point where the Appomattox

falls in the James. I wanted to reach the northern lines, and to get to them I must somehow cross the river. It was pitch dark, now, a moonless night in early December, and even in Virginia the water at that season was almost ice-cold in the tidal straits. But I knew I must swim it, sooner or later, and the sooner I tried it the better were my chances. I had eaten nothing since leaving the barracks, and I should probably get nothing to eat until I reached Burnside's army. Tonight, therefore I was comparatively strong; the longer I delayed, the weaker would my muscles grow with hunger. To lie out all night on the ground in the cold is not the best way of preparing one's self for swimming a mile's width of chilly river. Besides, I was almost certain to be observed in the daytime, and shot like a dog, by the one spy, or by the other as a deserter. My only chance lay in my getting into a plunged in boldly just as I found myself."

I shall never forget that awful swim in the dead of night across the tidal waters of the James river. The stars were shining dimly overhead through the valley mist, and by the aid of the Great Bear (for I did not know the pole star) I swam roughly in what I took to be a general northward direction toward the shore opposite. In a hundred yards or so the southern bank became visible, and I could not hope to see the northern until I had come within about the same distance of it. All the rest of the way I swam by the aid of the stars alone, so far as guidance or compass was concerned. I kept my eyes strained pretty steadily upward, and to hold up my head in a most difficult unnatural position on the surface of the water. The ice-cold stream chilled my frozen limbs, and the gloom and silence overhead made my head swim. I could not help but feel that my swim was a most heroic feat, and in my mind I took swimming cannot be measured by mere minutes. I only know it seemed to me then a whole eternity. Stroke after stroke, I swam mechanically, on each movement my muscles coming harder and harder. My trousers impeded my movement terribly; and though I had thrown off my coat on the further bank, to leave the arms free, the boots which I had tied around my neck made swimming more difficult and weighed my head down. My eyes were nearly blinded by the glare of the stars, and I was obliged to look up by clockwork. I must have been nearly three-quarters of the way across when I became aware of a new terror unexpectedly confronting me. My eyes had been fixed steadily upon the stars, so I had not noticed it before; and the noiseless working of the little screw had escaped my ears, even in that ghastly gloom. But, casting a hasty glance down the river as I went, I saw all at once with a thrill and horror, that a small steam launch, making up steam, was almost upon me. I knew immediately what she must be—the launch of the Rappahannock, a Confederate iron-clad, on her way up from Chesapeake Bay to the quay in Richmond."

I must live it out to get back to Elsie. That was the one thought that made up my whole being, as I lay there motionless, floating on the still water, numbed with cold, and half dead with my exertions."

I dared not move lest the launch should see by the dancing reflection of her light on the rippled waves I made, there was something astir ahead, and should give me chase and capture me as a deserter. I lay on my back, all at once silent surface, and waited with upturned face and closed eyes for the launch to pass by me—or run over me."

"As I floated I heard her screw draw nearer and nearer. I wondered whether I lay directly in her course. 'No, no help for it; she'd run me down.' It was safer so than to swim away and attract attention."

I turned my eyes sideways and opened them cautiously as the noise came close. By heaven, yes! she was heading straight for me! In my head I was shouting; it would almost be truer to say I let my self go under without conscious movement. The water closed about my face as I moved, and I felt something glide above me. It was the scum of the oil from the screw. I shut my eyes once more, and held my breath in my full chest. Next instant I was whirled by the after current back to the surface in the wide of the screw, and saw the white stars still shining above me."

"Something black on the water," shouted a voice behind. "Otter, I take it; or might be a nigger contraband dog, but either way, whatever it is, I'll have cockshot at it. Captain, anyway."

I dived again at the word, half dead with cold and fear; and even as I dived felt rather than heard the thud and hiss of a rifle bullet ricocheting on the water, just at the very point where my head had been only a moment earlier."

"Otter!" the voice said again, as I reached the surface, numbed and breathless, more dead than alive, and afraid to let anything but my mouth and ears rise above the black level of the water. And the steam launch moved steadily on her way without waiting to take any further notice of me."

The danger was past one more for the moment, but I was too exhausted to swim any further, deadened in my limbs with cold as I was, and cramped with my exertions. I could only float face upwards on my back, and soon became almost senseless from exposure. Every now and again, indeed, a consciousness seemed to return fitfully for a moment, and I struck out in blind energy with my legs, I knew not in what direction; but for the most part I merely floated like a log down stream, allowing myself to be carried restlessly before the sluggish current."

As day broke I revived a little. I must then have been at least three hours in the ice-cold water. I saw land within a hundred yards of me. With one despairing final effort, I know not how, I limbed and made for it—for land and Elsie."

Would Federal pickets be guarding the shore? That was my next anxiety. If so, my doom was sealed. Fortunately the shore here was unguarded; and Mitchell's redoubt, indeed, attacked from southward was always held impo-

sible. I dragged myself on land, over the muddy tidal flat, and found myself in the midst of that terrible, desolate, swampy region known as the Wilderness, the scene of the chief early struggle where Lee and Stonewall Jackson stood at bay like wounded tigers."

When I came to realize my actual plight I began to feel that a fool I had been to run away from Richmond. I sat there on the bank frozen and dripping from head to foot, my soaked boots hanging useless round my neck, my blood chilled, my limbs shivering, my heart almost dead, and yet with a terrible sense of fever in my cold lips, and a fierce throbbing in my aching head. I had no food, and no chance of getting any. Around me stretched that broken, marshy country, alternating between pine barrens and swampy bottoms. Scouts and pickets held the chief points everywhere; to show myself before them in my wet and ragged Confederate uniform would be to draw fire at moment's notice. What to do I had no conception; I merely sat there, my head in my hands, and waited and waited still, till the sun was high up in the black blue heavens."

I won't describe the eight days of speechless agony in the Wilderness. I wandered up and down through the scrub and pine woods, and not daring at first to sleep openly, and then, when hunger and fatigue had conquered my fear, not knowing where to look for the Federal outposts. Night after night I lay upon the bare ground, in the highest and driest part of the wild pine-barrens, and at the cold stars shining above, and heard the 'whoop-whoop' scream shrill overhead in the thick darkness. It was an awful time; I dare not trust myself even now to recall it too vividly. If it had not been for the wild persistence, indeed, I might have starved in that terrible week. But luckily the pessimism were very plentiful, and though a man can't live on them forever with absolute comfort, they will serve to keep body and soul together somehow for a longer time than any other wild herb or fruit I knew of."

"At last, on the fifth morning, as I lay asleep on the ground, weary and feverish, I felt myself rudely shaken by a rough hand, and opening my eyes with a stare, saw to my joy the northern uniform on the three men who stood around me."

"Spy!" the sergeant said briefly. "Tie his hands, O'Grady. Lift him up. March him before you." I told them at once I was a soldier in the Harvard Battalion, escaped from Richmond, but of course they didn't believe. My Confederate uniform told too false a story. However, I was far too weak to march, and the men carried me, one of them going on to get me food and brandy; for, spy or no spy, my life was clearly past all doubt, and that I was so faint and ill with hunger and exposure that to make me walk would have been sheer cruelty."

"Take him to headquarters," my captor or my rescuer said in a short voice, as soon as I had eaten and drunk greedily the bread and brandy the first man had brought up for me. They carried me to headquarters and brought me up before three officers. The officers questioned me feebly and incredulously. They would hear nothing of my being a Federal prisoner. The uniform alone was enough to condemn me. "Take him away and search him," they said peremptorily. The sergeant took me to a tent and searched me; and found nothing."

"Who is he?" the sergeant asked. They would try me by a rude rough-and-ready court-martial, and hang me for a spy that very morning."

"As I marched out from the sergeant's tent again, absolutely dispondent with a faint and feverish head, a major's uniform strode casually toward us. Promotion was often very quick in those days. The major I saw at a glance, was Claude Tyack."

He stopped and gazed at me sternly for a moment. "Not a muscle of his face stirred as he gazed at me. He said, 'I've heard of you, you're the fellow that I saw from head to foot, 'who's your prisoner?'"

"One of Lee's spies," the sergeant answered, carelessly. "Look him this morning out on the Wilderness. Round we've taken this week anyhow." The Rebs are getting kinder desperate, I reckon."

I looked Claude Tyack back in the face. He knew me perfectly, but never once intimated or faltered. "What will you do with him?" he asked, and "String him up," the sergeant replied, with a quiet grin."

I stood still and said nothing. They took me back and held a short informal drum court-martial. It was all over in five minutes. A man's life counts for so little in war time. I was half dead already, and never listened to it. The bitterness of death was past for me long ago. I stood bolt upright, my arms folded desperately in front, and said, "Claude Tyack, without further question, I am a Federal prisoner. I return, mute and white, in solemn expectation."

"You admit you are a spy?" the preceding officer asked me. "No," I replied. "I am a Federal prisoner from Richmond, late sergeant in the Massachusetts contingent."

"Can you get anyone to identify you?" "In Burnside's division—yes; hundreds."

The presiding officer smiled grimly. "Burnside's division is a long way off now," he said calmly. "It moved a month ago. We can't bring men all the way from Kentucky, you know, to look at you."

I bowed my head. It mattered little. I was too weary out to fight for my life any longer. I only thought of Elsie's misery. Then I became aware that Claude Tyack had jerked the ring a little louder, and was looking at me with fixed and rigid attention. "Nobody nearer?" the officer asked. I kept my eyes riveted on Tyack's. I could not appeal to him; not even for Elsie. He could not help me. I never knew till that moment I was a thought reader: but in Tyack's face I read it all—all he was thinking as it passed through his mind; read it, and felt, certain I read it correctly. If he showed me to be shot then and there, he would not only wipe out old scores, but he would also in time marry Elsie."

I saw these very words passing rapidly through his angry mind—"If it were not that I love Walter Ponsard with all my soul, I think, Mr Tyack, for very pity I should have to marry you!"

She would have to marry him! He would go back, certain of my death; he would plead hard, as he had pleaded before and then, for pity, Elsie would marry him!"

Our eyes met still; I returned his stare; tall and pale he stood confronting me; he glistened over my misfortune; we spoke never a word to one another; and yet we two men knew perfectly in our own hearts each what the other was thinking."

There was a deadly pause. The presiding officer waited patiently. The words seemed to stick in my throat. I moistened my lips with my tongue, and wetted my larynx by swallowing. Then I said slowly, "Nobody nearer."

The presiding officer waited again. Clearly he had no intention of condemning me to death himself, but I was in a man's seat and ill as I was. At last he cleared his throat nervously, and turned to the court with an inquiring gesture."

Then Claude Tyack took three paces forward and stood before me. The man seemed taller and paler than ever. Great drops of dew gathered on his brow. His lips and nostrils quivered with emotion. A frightful struggle was going on within him. The demon of revenge—just revenge, if revenge is ever just for an undeserved death—I recognized that—fought for mastery in his soul with right and mercy. "I need not identify him," he cried aloud, clasping his two hands over the other, and talking as in a dream. "I am not called to give evidence. He has never asked me."

"I will never ask you," I replied with dogged despair. "You have found me, eh, my enemy! I have wronged you bitterly. I know it and regret it. I will ask your forgiveness, but never yours, mercy."

Claude Tyack held up his hands, like a child, to his face. He was a rugged man, now though still young and handsome; but the tears rolled slowly, very slowly, one after another, down his bronzed cheeks. "You shall have my mercy," he answered at last with a groan, "because you do not ask it; but never, never, never, my forgiveness. For Elsie's sake, I cannot let her lover be shot for a traitor."

The presiding officer caught at it all as if by instinct. "You know this man, Major Tyack?" he asked, quietly. "I know him, Col. Libthorpe." "Who is he?"

The words came as if from the depths of the grave. "Walter Ponsard, Sergeant of the Harvard Battalion, Third Massachusetts Infantry, Burnside's division. He was missing seven months ago, after Chhattawanga."

"The name and description he gave himself. That is quite sufficient. The prisoner is discharged. Sergeant Ponsard, you shall be taken care of. Tyack, a word with you."

When I next was conscious, I found myself lying in a hospital at Washington. A nurse in a nurse's dress, was leaning over my bed. She kissed me on the forehead. "How about Tyack?" I asked eagerly. "Hush, hush!" she whispered, soothing my cheek. "You mustn't talk, darling. The fever has been terrible. We never thought your life would be spared for me."

"But Tyack," I cried. "I must hear of him! He has shot himself! His face was so terrible! I could never live if I thought I had killed him!" "He is here," Elsie whispered, pointing with her hand to the adjoining bed. "Wounded the very next day at the fight at Fredericksburg. I have nursed you both. Hush, now, hush darling!"

I said no more, but cried silently. I was glad his blood was not on my head. He died now, he died for his country, in the only just war ever waged on this world of ours. He had had his ordeal, and passed through it like a man and a soldier."

At that night I heard a noise and bustle at my bedside. Somebody was talking low and earnestly. I turned round on my side and listened. Elsie was standing by Tyack's bed, and holding his hand tenderly in hers. I knew why, and was not surprised at her. "Elsie, Elsie," he said, in a tremulous tone, "press me tighter. It will not be long now. I feel it creeping over me. I am so conscious!"

I sat up in my bed with delicious strength, in spite of Elsie, and cried aloud in a clear voice, "Tyack, I hear you!" "Ponsard," he said, turning his eyes and, without moving his neck, looking across at me. "I said once I would never forgive you. I am sorry I said so. If there is anything to forgive, I forgive it freely. Before I die give me your hand, Walter!"

He had never called me Walter before. The hot tears rose fast in my eyes, feeble and ill as I was, I sprang from my bed. Elsie clasped my left hand tight and flung the coarse coverlet loosely around me. I sat on the edge of Tyack's bed, and grasped his hand hard in mine. Elsie laid hers over her trembling lips; then she bent down and kissed the dying man too on his white forehead. His hand relaxed; his lips quivered. "Elsie, good-by!" he said, slowly, and all was over."

Proper Food for Breakfast. Appetites are apt to be capricious in the spring, especially as regards breakfasts. Don't force the family to eat at this season things which are not reliable. It is not difficult to provide dishes which will be eaten with zest. What should not be served at more than one breakfast in a week. Vary the fare by using hominy, cracked wheat, wheat germ, yellow corn meal, etc. Eggs creamed, poached, boiled, and cooked in the form of omelets, should be used freely. Broiled fish, thin slices of ham, of breakfast bacon nicely broiled, broiled chops, and add occasionally a steak, salt fish in cream sauce, corned beef hash, hashed meat on toast, fricassee of chicken or veal—these are reasonable dishes. Have potatoes cooked in simple, savory ways. Let the bread be light and well baked. Always have a good kind of coarse bread, either hot or cold. Dry, water and milk toasts, are all good for breakfast. Avoid fried food. When broiled the meat or fish forms a part of the breakfast in spring, it is a good plan to have a dish of water-cress or radishes on the table. Have fruit on the table when you can, and a few flowers, if possible. A few flowers and a bit of green bring a great deal of sunshine to the table. It takes thought and time to prepare those savory dishes which are so desirable at this season, but it pays to give the thought and time. The worker—and we are almost all workers—it makes considerable difference all day long whether a right start is made in the morning. The man or woman who begins the day with a hot, well cooked, simple breakfast will get through his or her work in a hundred per cent. better condition than he or she who has a poor meal. As the heaviest part of the daily work usually comes between breakfast and the mid-day meal, all householders should do their part to make the battle of life easy by providing proper food for the morning meal."

Another trick comes. Yes, his finger he drags. Or his head. He is turned to despair. As he touches the hair Of his little sister in church Still, each naughty trick At a look from the eye Or his mother so dear. Who thinks best to sit Her mischievous boy in ch.

But our glad surprise As his thoughtful eyes. In turned to despair. As he touches the hair Of his little sister in church Still, each naughty trick At a look from the eye Or his mother so dear. Who thinks best to sit Her mischievous boy in ch.

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Such children you know long ago. You're not the one. Or he trouble you. That I'm bound to cough But God made the boy With his fun and the And Henry wants them

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THE POET'S CROWN

How he turns and twines And how he persists In ratching his blades How unsteady he feels. Our wide-awake boy in ch. Then earnest and still. He attends with a will 'While the story is told Of some hero bold. Our dear, thoughtful boy!

But our glad surprise As his thoughtful eyes. In turned to despair. As he touches the hair Of his little sister in church Still, each naughty trick At a look from the eye Or his mother so dear. Who thinks best to sit Her mischievous boy in ch.

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