

CARDOME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

BY ANNA C. MINOQUE CHAPTER XIII

It was early afternoon of the second day of March, 1861. For an hour Judge Todd had been walking the veranda of the office. At intervals he would pause and look toward Georgetown, now clearly seen among its leafless trees. Twice the clatter of a horse's feet on the white road had stopped him; each time as the sound went past Cardome's gate, he resumed his steps with a sigh of disappointment. Sometimes he would lift his eyes and fix them on the red-walled house crowning the sloping lawn, whose green was beginning to show the gold of the crocus and the purple of the rosette; then, he would draw his Breckenridge cloak across his breast as if the chill that would come with his thoughts were caused by the coolness of the day. His two dogs slept in the sunshine which lay thickly on the porch floor; at times a negro would cross the lawn; but except these, no sign of life was seen about the place. The boisterous wind that lifted his white hair and whistled blithely around the corner of the office swayed the long, sweeping branches of the pine trees, and their voices seemed to fill the place with melancholy. Overhead was a clear, piercing blue sky, across which many fleecy, grayish-white clouds scudded like a phantom fleet. For the third time the Judge heard the sound of hoofs. As these ceased at the gate, the sound being lost in the sand-drift, something like a smile dispelled the shadow which had lain all day, and for many days, in his eyes. In the next minute the horse came around the curve and Phil McDowell swung himself from the saddle. The Judge threw open the office door, and as the warmth of the wood fire reached him, Phil exclaimed: "This is pleasant! The wind is blowing rather unaccountably today." He advanced to the hearthstone, and drawing off his riding gloves, held his hands toward the red blaze. "I am afraid we are going to have another fall of snow," remarked the Judge, as he went to a small cupboard and took out a decanter and glasses which he placed on the table, to which he drew two chairs. Phil removed his overcoat and seated himself. The Judge passed the decanter and the young man filled the small glass half full of the clear, amber liquor, whereat the Judge laughed his remonstrance. "You will find it good," he added, looking critically at each other's throats. "Peace? We will have peace, but not until we have spilled rivers of blood!" "All the light left the face under his gaze; the very lines seemed to grow deeper. "Ah!" The exclamation broke from the pale lips; then he said sorrowfully: "I had hoped for much from this Peace Conference, Phil. I had hoped Virginia again would save the country."

"Virginia was sincere in calling upon her sister States," said Phil. "But before she will yield one iota of her rights she is ready to follow Southern Carolina. I was in Washington from the 15th until the close of the Conference, and I declare to you that every effort put forth by the Southern States for a peaceful solution of our difficulty met, at some turn or corner, the fiercest opposition. The North will have her way, though that way must lead over battlefields. If Lincoln attempts pacific measures, his impeachment is sure to follow. The North abhors slavery; the North is opposed to any restriction of territory—such were the phrases hurled at the South in the Peace Conference. 'Such restrictions' declared Massachusetts through her representative, 'are unnecessary, and the time may come when they would be found troublesome. We want the Canadas.' Ah! Imperialism!" he went on. "Iust of territory; an empire! This is the Old Bay State for you! She would have this if it must be purchased by the blood and liberty of a people—a worthy child of her mother, England!" "And yet," said the Judge, "it was Massachusetts that fastened slavery upon us. When Virginia would have closed her ports against the importation of slaves, Massachusetts rose in her might and forbade it. The South heard the royal command and obeyed. But when she found it unprofitable to herself, New England abolished slavery, and now demands that the South shall do the same."

"And if the South does not," interrupted Phil, "listen to New England's verdict, as uttered by her mouthpiece, Massachusetts? The South must give up what she considers her right. If the South persists in the course on which she has entered, we shall march our armies to the Gulf of Mexico! That is how New England wants to settle our difficulties! The grim old Puritan spirit that burned women and mutilated men for holding different convictions would in the same spirit deprive us of the most sacred right of freemen, or exterminate us!" "And what did the South say to that?" cried the old man, every nerve quivering with indignation. McDowell rose to his feet, his face beaming with the exultation of his heroic soul. "Kentucky answered for the South," he said, proudly, "and when Kentucky speaks, men have learned to listen to her words."

"Guthrie?" asked the old man. "Yes, it was Guthrie," returned McDowell, "who threw down the glove, and I seem still to hear his ringing voice as he said: 'We ask for our rights under the Constitution. The gentleman from Massachusetts says he will not give them; that his State will not yield. Well, if this is so, let us go to the ballot-box. If the question is decided in the gentleman's favor, we know how to take care of ourselves.'"

"A noble answer, nobly spoken!" cried the Judge. "A wise one, too," he continued, thoughtfully. "Let the question go to the ballot. Let the people be asked plainly whether they want war or not—whether they wish to ensanguine their hands with the blood of their countrymen, or live with them in peace and love, and we can not doubt which way the matter will be decided."

"Phil shook his head. 'We have gone too far,' he said. 'or, rather, we of the South have been pushed too far. We have lost faith in the government; we have no security; our rights are ignored; our property subject to the confiscation of every fanatic. Means of redressing ourselves we have none. Can you, Judge Todd, contemplate for the South the fate of Hungary?'" "God forbid!" exclaimed the Judge. "Neither can I contemplate the dissolution of the Union that was forged by the blood of our fathers. For Liberty and the Union, they died," corrected McDowell, "and the terms are not necessarily and imperatively synonymous. However, a smile lighting up his fine countenance, "I know and respect your convictions, and we must have a repetition of the Peace Conference here," and his eyes travelled, with tender remembrance, around the little office, with its high bookcases, its many busts and pictures of Kentucky's great and glorious dead, until they rested on the portrait of the Great Pacificator.

"Yes, if he were here," cried the Judge, reading the young man's thoughts, "he might save us, as he did once before. And yet," he continued, "I have sometimes thought that it would have been better if the dispute had been earlier decided by swords. If when South Carolina hurled her first gauntlet of defiance at the government in 1862, they had then picked it up and fought to the issue, we should have settled our difference forever. And we had men then! We had a chief as just as he was courageous, while on either side were supporters, whose views were broad, generous, liberal; statesmen, not politicians, and the like of whom our country shall not see again. They were the leaders for a people to battle under against each other, leaders who could be generous and just to an enemy, and who, when the fight was over, would clasp the hand of friendship over sheathed swords. Now, instead of statesmen we have demagogues; instead of leaders we have fanatics; instead of justice we have party hatred. If we have war, it will be a war of vengeance, of flaming wrath, of desecration. May God save the country, for He alone can!"

"A full minute's silence hung between the two men. Then the Judge, turning his eyes from the yellow flames licking around the beech logs, said: "I have waited impatiently for this day, Phil. Tell me all."

THE PRIEST OF THE SACRED HEART

In one of the poorest districts of Rome, attached to a little new church dedicated to the Sacred Heart and St. Dominic, erected by himself, there dwells a twentieth-century saint. His days are passed in the service, both spiritual and corporal, of his necessitous neighbors. The children love him; there is no good work that does not gratefully acknowledge the benediction of his earnest interest, but before and above all he is known solely and simply as "The Priest of the Sacred Heart."

For the love of the Incarnate Love is his life's great passion. And this title is at once his dearest treasure and his greatest humiliation. For he was not always a "vessel of election," rather his vocation is one of the victories of the Sacred Heart, "one of the miracles of its mercy" as he himself has been heard to say. And, years ago, thus it was that he occurred.

Padre Domenico's eyes were full of tears. And his heart was sorely agitated. He paced his little, austere room, with its scholarly though few and unpretentious rows of neatly kept book shelves. With out the wind was howling dimly, and the rain dashed with dreary violence upon the window panes. The night was dark and cheerless. His solitary candle, flaming at the foot of the image of the Crucified, flickered fitfully in the strong gusts of wind that ever and anon swept the draughty apartment.

"Oh! poor, poor blinded soul!" he exclaimed aloud at last, repeating the words in a voice broken with emotion. Suddenly retracing his steps he cast himself before the sombre cross with its meek, compassionate figure, which dominated the severely simple room that seemed no unfitting shrine for its unearthly majesty.

"Lord," he cried, fixing his streaming eyes upon the gentle face that appeared to bend towards him in pitiful condescension as he prayed, his ameked hands clasping closely a cherished little image of the Sacred Heart. "Ah! gentle Lord, Heart of Love, Who cometh from heaven to this our desolate world to seek and to save that which was lost, behold! behold! I, an unworthy shepherd of Thy flock, cast myself upon Thy pitiful mercy. See, Lord, I can do naught for him, this poor one for whom I plead and pray. Thou knowest I have indeed striven my best to bring Thee back Thy wandering child! And woe, ah! woe is me! I have failed! I have no hope but in Thy mercy. Save him, who alone canst, save him from utter, endless misery! I can but weep before Thee; I am an unprofitable servant; save, Thou this soul, and Thine alone, O Heart of my God, shall be the glory!"

And as he wept and besought, there came suddenly over the holy priest a strange hush and calm. Before him rose, so clear and beautiful he knew not whether it was with the mind's eye he beheld it or whether in very truth the blessed vision glimmered on the dimness of the faintly illuminated apartment; the tender figure of the Saviour even as he greeted the holy Visitation in her convent chapel years ago. And as he gazed upon that glowing Heart, "the hope of all who mourn," the Heart of the Eternal Shepherd, there fell, as it were, a balm and a strange sweet gladness as of paradise upon his wounded spirit. For within the arms of the Redeemer, clad in the shining radiance of a vested priest, there smiled upon him the soul for whom he had spent himself in midnight vigils before the Eucharistic heart of God, in austerities and in ceaseless exhortations and pleadings—the soul for whom even then he was in anguish.

And the voice that had charmed thousands on the hills and plains of Palestine fell like a silver bell on his enraptured ear: "Domenico, wouldst thou gain this soul for Me? It is a pearl of great price, and he who would buy it must needs pay highly for it. What wilt thou offer for his sheep?" returned Padre Domenico simply. "Willingly I offer Thee my life; it is all I can, and less I cannot."

And the gracious answer came sweet and soft, like the refreshing sparkling of a fountain in a parched desert, to his weary soul: "The gem"

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