

came in the rear, looking guardedly to either flank lest of surprise, the lady riding a horse's length ahead of him. She had attempted to place her steed alongside of his and converse; but he replied not to her remarks otherwise than:—

"Permit me, madam, to ride last; we are in a place of danger."

A second time she would have fallen back to companionship, and to remark on the brief, possibly very brief, life-time now before her; but he spoke curtly:

"I beg you will proceed, Madam, in the order we now march in. Should we be so fortunate as to meet when this war is over, explanations may be given. With first daylight I send you under escort to the Provost Guard, where you'll meet the other lady. Should you both be urgent in taking to the duties of ambulance nurses, the authorities in superior position to me will, no doubt, accept the offered help. The Redbolt scouts are on a service where lady nurses cannot be retained."

"Ah me!" sighed Agnes, in bitterness; "his ambition to be a distinguished soldier shuts out every other sentiment. One cold word from him freezes the life in me. Half an hour ago when I thought him tender my heart fluttered in light and warmth. I will ride forth into the night and go away. On, and out into the world, anywhere, and never turn. At last I shall sink to the ground, and my horse will go his way."

While thoughts of this import engrossed the mind of the maiden, the stern captain of cavalry held communion with himself, thus:—

"What luxury of expectancy to revel in happy married life in the bright future, could I believe in the love of Agnes. And could I enclose her for safety within castle walls and palace gardens until this war is ended. And I from this great American conflict parted; transferred to the service of my own nation. To aid in the development of human happiness in my own land. The spirit of ancestry within me tells it is native land, destined to perpetuity of national life, and to a moral grandeur excelling physical magnificence."

After exulting in the grand future of British Empire, he reverted to the lady companion:

"Dare I admit the fond belief this lady comes hither for me alone? Her family are lawyers of acumen and far-reaching policy. She may share their nature. Her father called me impostor while yet I pretended to nothing but what others constrained me to permit them to do. He was unjust and cruel."

"Yet how unspeakably greater is this wrong of coldness to his daughter if she be here really through love for me? Braving perils of ocean and of battle-fields for love of me? I extending no tender hand to hers; to hers more than once offered."

"Am I in love a miser, avaricious, who would thus enrich myself? Take into my inner being the rich love of Agnes, but give nothing in exchange until I prove how true and pure the treasure is she offers?"

"Heavens! what am I trifling with? Perilous my own soul with? The pure passionate love of a young life offered to my acceptance. Her presence here means bride of the future, if I can rise to the full estimate of what it has cost her to conquer the reluctance of delicate perceptions and refined associations, for sake of meeting me at such hazard."

"Mystery of nature! The outflow of a pure moral impulse constrained in this direction, as mine at first to her by lines and links of the affinities, instant as electricity, subtle as unhidden thought."

The villa residence at Byner Clyne bore appearances within of having had visitors not many hours before, although the Redbolts knew it to have been deserted by the Clyne family since Sumter. A kitchen stove was still warm, and fragments of a dinner remained. But to repeated calls no voice answered. Sentinels were posted outside, and the horses picketed in the sheds. Then rooms were allotted; the best in point of furniture and seclusion to the lady.

Captain Lud appointed an orderly to wait on Agnes. Then he went to her himself, leaving open the door, to learn if she had any special instruction to give.

"No, sir, I require nothing. If it pleases you to furnish an escort for me in the morning, well. If not I ride alone, or remain here, as my inclination may be."

"Miss Schoolar, were this a London drawing-room, or were we in peaceful Canada, I might address you in a different attitude. But your personal honour and mine demand —"

A voice interrupting:

"That you go to peaceful Canada."

He looked around, but saw no one who could have spoken, unless some Redbolt troopers in the next room.

"It sounded as a woman's voice," Agnes remarked.

"One of the men," he rejoined, "making himself pleasant at my expense. They begin to suspect me unfit for command seeing a lady in my retinue. An additional reason that we part, Miss Schoolar, to meet—not again until the war is over. I advise that either you return to England at once, or go to Canada. Suppose you go to Conway in Canada and dwell near Mrs. Renshaw—El Abra's mother. She is a woman of a quiet generous nature,

though mother of such a son. No, you had no opportunity to see him. He is gentle or ferocious; generous or cruel; simple as a child or cunning as an evil spirit. Physically powerful; mentally a master among men. Such is the character I've heard of him; and as this night we have experienced. Good-night, madam; may you sleep well."

"You began, sir, talking of El Abra's mother, and don't finish. What would you I did beside her?"

"You would learn all she knows about me. Your discretion, Agnes, might alight on means of communication with me should you desire it. Or you might learn the movements of El Abra in Canada."

"And betray them to you, Captain? Really, you would have me stoop lower than nursing in a field ambulance in track of the Redbolt cavalry?"

"That is not the meaning to be implied, madam. If El Abra, in his escape to-night, has carried the packet with him, which he showed me and described in your hearing, it might be useful to Miss Schoolar to know into whose hands it passes."

"Captain, that packet containing proofs of your birthright was pressed on me by El Abra, when you were absent awhile from the tent. I refused it, lest you might have thought me sordid. I came to America to be near Toby, if wounded, not to assist Lillymere to his title and estates."

"The Guerilla offered the proofs of my birthright? And you, Agnes, declined the burden of their possession?"

"I refused them, saying that if accepted, you'd despise me as sordid."

"Noble Agnes! A time may yet come when all my thanks and all my love may be told."

"Tell it now while I'm alive, Toby. Tell some of it now, dear Toby. That I may have life, going away in the morning; life to await your coming out of this war. Come out of the war now, dear Toby. Will you?"

"Agnes, every sentiment of tenderness must now yield to the duty demanded by the service I'm in."

"El Abra told of the mother, whom you have only known in dreams, being within a day's journey, come from England, looking for you, her lost boy. Will you not go meet her? Protect her? Give her joy at seeing her lost one alive?"

"Miss Schoolar, it may be the Guerilla Chief spoke truth, when he told of the presence at his home of the mother whom I have prayed the Holy Heavens to bring me to, in this life or in another life; she whom I don't know to have seen except in dreams; whose vision comes within me as a part of my own being. It may be true she is within a day's journey, yet not even to that gracious presence could I depart from my post of duty in this crisis of a nation's life—the Hope of Mankind."

He paused at this superlative; then proceeded to another.

"Agnes, if passionate love had a language all its own, and I the master of its eloquence, I'd tell through every hour, in every circuit of the sun between now and death, that I love, I love you."

"Oh, Toby! Do my poor tingling ears hear you truly?"

"Truly do I speak, Agnes. Hard has it been on me to-night to repress this utterance; but now you have the asseveration."

"And the utterance of the precious words I have heard gives to this timid heart strength. Oh, come out of danger, Toby!"

"I have but faintly spoken the love I bear you, Agnes. It exceeds the compass of language."

"Come out of danger, Toby. Come to England."

"Not until this war is ended; the most righteous war a nation ever engaged in, for suppression of the least justifiable of any rebellion known to history. Not until this supreme conflict ends, could I separate from it to accept the fortune said to be awaiting me in England."

"Nothing more awaiting but title and estate in England?"

"Perchance my bride, and a bridal day, in presence of which the fair and flowery world will glow in fresher beauty. But even that delectable day and joy must yield, and are postponed until this war is ended. Good night, Agnes. Let us dream."

Agnes observed in her room traces of former occupants, indicating feminine youth and refinement; one or more ladies whom the storm of war had driven forth, as it had drifted herself in. When she had composed tumultuous thoughts to a degree of quietude, sleeping some and dreaming, she was awakened by the opening of a door opposite to that of her entrance, and of the Captain's departure. It had been examined and seemed bolted, its key away. A tremulous voice spoke: "Miss Hestra, are you sleeping?"

Agnes, peering from the muslin curtains, observed a black woman in white night-dress, holding a taper. The voice spoke again:

"Miss Byner Clyne, are you there?"

Then the woman advanced, drew aside the muslin, held the light higher, lower, this side the face, and that side, muttering:

"The war makes folk so different, I cannot be sure it is Miss Hestra Byner Clyne."

Though this was spoken in the vernacular of a negress, and might here require some bad spelling, Agnes noted that the plural word 'folk' was spoken grammatically. The woman continued:

"I ought to know all the Miss Byner Clynes ever born, yet am uncertain if I ever saw this one. But the war does change folk so much. I've let her sleep. Poor dear, whoever she be, her sleep is good."

Agnes, feeling at heart that this woman was sympathizing and gentle, put forth her hand; touched the fingers of the negress; opened her eyes, and entreated softly:

"Hush! Don't be alarmed. I'm not Miss Clyne, but a friend."

"A friend of the cause?"

"A friend of your cause? Yes."

"We are all rebs here. How you, a young lady, should be sound asleep in this house with those Yankees all around is more than I understand. Are you a prisoner?"

"In a manner I'm a prisoner. They have not ill-treated me, thus far."

"D'ye know Missus El Abra?"

"The great Chief, El Abra? Yes."

"Not the General himself; I mean his mother."

"His mother? Thought his mother was in Canada?"

"She is here. Would you choose see her? She wants to know if you'll escape with her. There is like to be a great fight in the morning. You had best flee in time."

"Where do you go?"

"None know where I take to. I stay by this house; was born here; will die here."

"Are you a free woman, or slave?"

"They say all negroes are now freed, to help the Yankees in this war. If I'm a slave, I'll die in the war a slave, and in this house, which I may call my own almost. The Byner Clynes are good folk, and always treated coloured servants good."

"What is your name?"

"Henny Rinky. If you be friend of the Byner Clynes, you cannot but have heard talk of Henny Rinky, sure."

"Let me explain, Henny, please. I am their friend in the sense of not being an enemy. But I'm a stranger, and would not like you to inform me of anything about the Clyne family, or the rebel cause, which a stranger may have no right to know."

"Are you American born?"

"No; I'm English."

"English! And a prisoner? El Abra is English, they say. Where did you fall into hands of the Redbolts?"

"When they fought with El Abra, some hours ago."

"You'd have to conceal yourself with me underground, if not escaping before the fighting begins. There will be the a'mightiest battle this morn, I'm told, ever fought in creation. Miles and miles, as far as a mule would trot to harness in a day, is full of men a-going to battle at daylight."

"I am likely to go into the battle also, Henny. You spoke of escape; but where escape to? And how, surrounded by armies on all sides?"

"Anyway, best rise now and prepare. The Redbolts will be caught in this trap by daylight or soon after, and every one hung. I'll go now to Rhoda El Abra, and return in ten minutes. Be ready then, if you value life and a woman's honour."

When the coloured housekeeper retired, Agnes leapt from her couch; and while arranging her dress, held conflict with herself, thus:

"Toby and his men to be entrapt and hung! Service of honour dictates, what? I knowing the design not to disclose it, because confided to me by one of those under whose protection I'm to be, if protected at all. Betray confidence; I did not seek the confidence. Must inform and warn Toby at all hazards. But how?"

The captain had locked the lady's chamber door outside. Agnes sought egress, and failing, invited notice by tapping, but none answered.

Presently the black housekeeper returned by the other door, of which she had the key; followed by El Abra's mother, a venerable matron of middle stature, whose abundant hair had become a freckled fawn and white. It descended from beneath a muslin mutch, made in form of a hood, with knots of black ribbon, in clusters of natural curls to her shoulders, and down the back, outside a cloak of Canada grey. They did not delay over formal introductions. The matron, addressing the young lady, said:

"You are Miss Schoolar, the English lady who spoke with El Abra to-night? I've seen him since. He told me what passed. I am in this place by accident, and against my will. Came in search of my son to draw him from this war if possible. If not possible, to save at least some of his property. And now it will be all I can do to escape. There is a way, however, which you also may take. If preferring to go with me you may, possibly after a time, obtain possession of the packet, so important to Lillymere, which you declined to accept a few hours since. If the Captain be discreet he will follow with us, or quickly depart from hence."

Such the substance of a hurried conversation.

"Give me leave, Senora El Abra —"

"Stay, not that; I'm Mrs. Renshaw from Canada; and going to that country, right away."

"Give me leave, Mrs. Renshaw, to privately consult with Toby, at least to warn him."

(To be continued.)

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