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THE SOUTHERNER'S DAUGHTER. — AN INCIDENT OF THE WAR.

Amidst the beautiful scenery of the Shenandoah Valley lies a little sheltered glen, so secluded that even the light and heat of the sun's rays scarcely penetrated the leafy canopy above the heads of the few travellers who have crossed its paths. On three sides it is bounded by wooded heights, on the other, washed by a branch of the broad Shenandoah.

Here, one evening, a small but resolute band of men, whose retreat had been cut off, were concealed. They wore 'the gray,' and the surrounding hills bristled with the rifles of the Federals. In the stern silence that reigned, they could hear the voices of the distant pickets. Night was coming on, and the dark outline of each other's faces could hardly be discerned.

One started up from their midst. 'Let us climb the hill to the left—then, if compelled, fight our way through. To lie here would be to die the death of the hunted beast.' 'Impossible,' exclaimed a comrade. 'We should be overpowered and made prisoners; but could we not swim across the stream?'

'No,' said another, who raised himself from the ground and leaned upon his elbow while he spoke; 'there are troops, on the other side, who would discern and fire upon us; better wait until morning. The Yankees will not remain long in their present quarters; and the weary man sank down again to rest and sleep.

At last it was agreed that one of the number should swim across the river, reconnoitre the opposite bank, then signal to his companions to follow, if it were possible to do so with safety.

Lots were cast, and the perilous task fell upon the first sneaker, a tall fine-looking man of middle age. He grasped the hand of each of his comrades, and lifted his hat reverently, saying:

'God protect my children if I fall!—then plunged into the stream.

Major Courtney, as we must now call him, reached the other side of the river under shelter of some deeply overhanging willows that fringed the shore. He heard the distant roll of the drum; it came nearer, then a number of Union soldiers passed by the friendly willows concealing him from their view. Two of the men untied their horses from a tree to which they had been secured, then rode on to join a large force which occupied a position higher up the river. From the few words Major Courtney overheard, he gathered that at midnight they were to march.

The Southerner's home was within twenty miles of this spot. After some consideration he decided to walk the distance and return early in the morning. To give the concerted signal now, it would be fraught with danger to his friends. On reaching the place where the horses had been fastened, he beheld a third. The powerful instinct of self preservation was irresistible.—Major Courtney unloosed the animal, led him a short distance, then mounted, and never drew rein until arriving at his own dwelling.

A summons brought his anxious wife and daughter to the door.

'Thank God, my dear ones are safe,' were the Major's first words. The toil-worn man sat down between them, and gladly partook of the welcome food they hastily placed before him. He related the story of his escape, and his anxiety to place the promised signal on the river's bank early in the morning, saying to his daughter:

'Virginia, I must be astir by daybreak. You are an early riser; I depend upon you to arouse me. I shall take a fresh horse, and ride to Willow Creek.'

Virginia had, while her father was speaking, determined in her own mind what course to pursue. She kissed him, bade him good night, and hastened to the bedside of a young girl, who held a situation in the household. Waking her from her sleep, in a few words she told her of the Major's return and of his peril in the woods; then added,

'Annie, you must assist me to take my dear father's place in the morning; he is worn out with fatigue and loss of sleep.'

Annie Connolly's father held a small farm on the Major's estate. She was devoted to her young mistress, and protested that she would accompany her. At last Virginia consented, but they must leave early, and be away before any of the household had risen. Annie tried to sleep for a few hours, Virginia hastened to her own room to prepare a suitable toilet for her adventurous ride. She placed ready a dark brown dress and white sun-bonnet; a colored sash she would borrow from Annie. She laid down upon her bed, but dared not sleep. At last the first faint evidence of dawn appeared. After bathing her face in cold water, and fastening up the long dark curls that floated round her neck, she went to arouse her companion. The girl

started up at her voice. They were soon dressed, and stole softly down the stairs. Virginia prepared their breakfast, while Annie saddled the horses.

'Miss Virginia, we must each carry a basket; we shall then appear as we were going to sell farm produce.'

'Well thought of, Annie; and let us put in some cold meat and bread. When the poor fellows cross the river they will be glad to find a basket of provisions.'

The stables were some distance from the house, so they rode off unheard.

Virginia Courtney was only seventeen, but she was a brave, high spirited girl, fearless of danger; and she declared she had never in her life enjoyed a ride so much. Annie's knowledge of the country served them well, and by a cross road the distance was shortened a few miles.—At length they reached the river, dismounting, Virginia tied her handkerchief to a tree that grew close to the water's edge. They tore off some of the branches and leaves that it might be perceived, placed their baskets at the foot of the tree, and then hastened to mount their horses and return home.

Major Courtney had, as Virginia rightly conjectured, slept long and soundly; but there was great consternation in the little household when the absence of the two girls was discovered.—The father felt convinced that his child had gone to supply his place; then admiration for his brave daughter, and anxiety for her safety, in turn, occupied his mind.

At noon Virginia and Annie reached their home, and received the congratulations of all but Philip Courtney, Virginia's young brother, who declared he would never forgive her for not informing him of the intended ride.

'Never mind, Philip,' she said, 'there will be plenty of time and opportunity for you to distinguish yourself.'

'I ought to have been called last night when father came home. You and mamma treat me as if I was a child, and I am almost fourteen.'

'Well Philip, you shall ride over to-morrow and see if my signal is gone; and so the matter was compromised.

The following day a party of Confederate soldiers passed Major Courtney's house on their way to join the army at Richmond. A few Union prisoners were with them, among the number, one severely wounded. Fainting with exhaustion and loss of blood, he begged them to lay him down in the court-yard. They, thinking he was dying, placed him there and went on their way. Virginia brought him wine, then, preparing lint and bandages, besought Dinah, an old negress, who was looked upon as surgeon to the establishment, to go and attend to his wounds. Dinah pronounced her patient's case to be hopeless, but had a bed prepared for him in the basement, where she could visit him in the basement, where she could visit him with greater convenience. She was never so happy as when attending to the sick; and the more desperate the case, the more satisfaction Aunt Dinah appeared to receive.

The next morning Major Courtney would leave his home, and endeavor to rejoin the troops from whom he and his comrades had been separated. It might be long before he returned.—Before parting from his family, he visited his prisoner to inquire his name and regiment. He found him dressed and lying on the bed, and scarcely recognized in the handsome young man before him the pallid, almost lifeless one of the previous day.

'I am glad to hear from your nurse that you are in less pain this morning,' said the Southerner.

'I thank you, Major Courtney, as I understand that to be your name. A comfortable bed in place of the damp ground, with the fresh, cool bandages have greatly restored me. The wound in my right arm is, I fear, beyond Dinah's skill, as the ball will have to be extracted. I was so unfortunate as to lose my horse; then, not being able to keep up with my party, fell, as you saw, into the enemy's hands, and they gave too warm a reception.'

'How came you to lose your horse; was he killed?'

'No, Major, I had secured him, as I thought, to a tree; two of my comrades brought off theirs. I was detained on business with the Sergeant—when, when I went to search of mine, he was gone.'

A shadow crossed the Major's brow. 'What color is your horse?'

'A dark gray.'

'He is safe in my stable. Some other time I will tell you how he found his way here; at present, sir, consider yourself not my prisoner, but guest. I shall leave orders that you are supplied with everything you wish. In the meantime, a surgeon shall attend to your wounded arm.'

A little timid knock sounded at the door.

'Papa, will you give the gentleman this fruit? It is fresh gathered.'

'Ha!—is that you, my runaway?'

A smile lighted up the stern features of the father, as he stooped to kiss the fair brow of his child.

'Virginia, in my absence you will see to the comforts of—'

'Captain Osborne, sir, is my name.'

'—To Captain Osborne being provided with all he may require. Most probably he will be here when I come again.'

He saluted the Federal officer, and taking his daughter's hand, left the apartment. The door closed; Osborne fell back upon the bed from which he had risen. It appeared to him as if, with Virginia, the sunshine had vanished from the room.

In a few weeks, Captain Osborne was the favorite of the household. He played checkers with Mrs. Courtney, every description of game with Philip, and read poetry with Virginia. The young officer was remarkably handsome; she liked his society, perhaps, too: a warm feeling entered her heart; but if it did she determined to crush it. Her pride was stronger than her love.

Osborne had now, by the successful treatment of the surgeon and Aunt Dinah, almost recovered from the injuries he met with at the hands of the Confederate soldiers; but while that cure was effected, he received another wound beyond the art of surgeon or nurse to heal. The daily intercourse with Virginia had so fascinated him that he looked forward with regret to the day that would part them—probably forever. They had read the same books, selected the same passages for admiration, and on all subjects but one shared the same opinion; that one was not named by either. 'To win so lovely a being was surely worth an effort; and late at last assisted him in the opportunity he had sought.

A letter arrived from Major Courtney. Enclosed was a note for Captain Osborne, relieving him from his parole—explaining the cause of his horse being missing on the night of the Major's escape and regretting the inconvenience and danger to which he had consequently been subjected.

The young officer handed the letter to Virginia. He watched her expressive countenance as she perused it, and mistook the tears that started to her eyes for regret at his departure. They were in admiration of her father's generous and manly sentiments.

'Dear Virginia,' he hastily exclaimed, 'since that day when I lay wounded well nigh unto death, the sweet moistening angel I then beheld has been the first one in my thoughts, will be the last while my heart throbs. Home, friends, all alike unceasing for—and, great God! the cause for which I have fought almost forgotten while I lingered here. Tell me, dearest, have you no return to make for such love as mine?'

'Hush, hush! I may not listen to you,' answered Virginia, the crimson blush which his warmth had called forth leaving her cheek pale in her deep emotion. 'The Southern girl cannot exchange words of love with the enemy of her land. Our paths are widely separated. In another cause I have lived, and in it I will die—it is my faith. Go now Captain Osborne; I rejoice that you have recovered—that you are spared to your friends.'

'Virginia,' he pleaded, 'give me some hope before we part. When the war is ended friend and foe may then be united. Your father is a brave, noble gentleman. If I ask from him the hand of his child—'

'He would say,' proudly interrupted Virginia, 'that the Southerner's daughter could never marry with the soldier of the Union!'

'Farewell, then, Miss Courtney; my bright dream is over. Come, my good sword, we have been too long parted.' He endeavored to buckle it on his arm still in the sling.

'Stay, Captain Osborne,' said Virginia; 'I will send Philip to assist you. See, he is returning from a ride. He will also bring out your horse. Good-bye!'

Her voice softened. He took her hand and kissed it warmly.

'God bless you, Virginia, sweet Southern flower—farewell!'

And so they parted, never to meet again.

About this time the two armies alternately had the mastery. The Federals had been successful, but the tide of war now turned to the Confederate army. Many weeks passed away since Major Courtney left his family; frequently had he been in some peril and harassing duty; all the time very far distant from them. Now a suspension of hostilities took place, and the Major obtained leave of absence to visit his home. He was accompanied by a friend, Captain Hazelton, one of the party who lay concealed in the wooded glen, and it was he, who on reaching the bank of the river, first seized the welcome signal. Virginia's handkerchief—there was her name embroidered on it. He had

carried it with him ever since, and now proudly displayed. The blushing girl held out her hand to receive it.

'No, Miss Courtney,' said he, 'after the *Bonne Blue Flag*, I value this handkerchief. Your father has often named his brave young daughter who periled her life that he, toil-worn and weary, might snatch a few hours' repose.

Captain Hazelton was some years older than his rival, the Federal officer, but he, too, though dauntless in the field, was subdued, and fell an easy victim to all powerful love.

The temporary truce ended, the two friends returned to the army, but before departing, Hazelton solicited from Major and Mrs. Courtney the hand of their child, Virginia's consent was more difficult to obtain. She had no wish to leave the happy home from which she had never been separated. At length he gained it, conditionally, that he would watch over her dear father's safety.

The war was finally ended before the two officers returned. Captain Hazelton had then fairly earned his promised reward, Virginia's hand, by having at the hazard of his own life, sought for among the dead and dying, and carried off the battle field the wounded Major, conveying him in safety to his home.

Virginia is now married. So devoted a daughter could not fail to make a true and loving wife. Her husband regards her with affectionate pride, as, in their choice circle of admiring friends, he will sometimes relate how a few scattered Confederate soldiers were rescued in their lonely retreat by the determination and courage of the 'Southerners Daughter.'

WHITE HANDS.

'A fine hand is one of the first points of beauty.'

Thus read Kate Palmer, as she sat at the parlor window on a bright winter morning. Letting fall the magazine in which she had been reading, she looked complacently at the delicate, taper fingers that lay among the crimson folds of her dress. Her other hand, adorned with snowy curls and simple bracelet of jet, crushed the brown cuffs that fell over her brow.

It was a pretty scene for those who passed over the frozen street on that clear, cold morning—a radiant, lovely picture. The lace curtains drawn aside, the arm-chair of blue plush, and the graceful form that filled it, the mirror dress looking warm and fleecy in the sunshine, the young head pensively bowed, the downcast eyes and delicate profile, the shining curls and the lovely hand carelessly pressing them. It looked beautiful, and Kate knew it. So she sat still, gazing reflectively at the snowy hand on her knee.

'Oh, dear!' she sighed, 'I wish I had a ring. I'd give all the world for a solitary like Madge Madsen's! How artfully she put up her little fat hand, and pretending to be biting her finger nails, so that I might see her diamond. Engaged to be married!—he idea! She is as plain as a pipe-stem, and not much longer engaged. And I—well, everybody knows that I am pretty, and where's the harm of knowing it myself?—to face the truth, I've never had an offer! Of course, Madge is a fool. I wouldn't have Dick Jay if he was hung with jewels from his nose to his toes—not I. But there is one I would have, and oh! wouldn't I have diamonds too? Well, it takes two rings to get married, and I haven't either of them. To be sure, there is time enough yet. I'm just eighteen, and prettier than any girl I know, if I do say it.—Shan't I feel old when I get to be twenty though?'

Kate was interrupted by the entrance of her mother, a faded woman of fifty, whose whole appearance indicated a life of labor.

'Kate,' said Mrs. Palmer, with some severity, 'you must do something. I'm so tired that I can hardly stand, and here you sit, hour after hour, idling away your time. You must do differently. You must change your course. I cannot do all the work any longer. The weather is too cold, and I am not well. Change your dress immediately, and come down stairs.'

Her daughter neither moved nor spoke, and Mrs. Palmer sank dejectedly, into the nearest chair.

'There, mother,' cried Kate, 'you'll spoil that plush. The idea of sitting down in the parlor with such a looking dress!'

Those words, 'the idea,' conveyed Kate's strongest contempt. Mrs. Palmer's face wore an expression of despair.

'My daughter,' she said quietly, but in a voice that shook with feeling, 'I am growing old. I have labored hard to bring you up according to my theory of right. Too late I see that I was wrong. I have denied myself a thousand things, that you might be denied nothing. From your infancy I have dressed you elegantly, and always at the expense of my comfort. Year in, and year out, I have toiled like a slave, that you

might enjoy the best advantages. What reward have I? I was content to live in four pleasant rooms, but you wanted more style; and since I had never learned to deny you, I came here. I was content with three ply carpets, and furniture of mahogany and hardscloth. You must needs have Brussels, and plush, with rosewood and marble. You were gratified, but at a terrible sacrifice. Then I never kept a servant; now I certainly cannot. Yet the work is four times what it was, and I naturally thought that you would assist me, but I mistook. You must be dressed in elegance at times—anything is good enough for me. I cannot even go to church for want of proper apparel. Your white hands must not be soiled—look at mine! They are bruised, and chapped, and swollen; but no matter! It is no one but mother, and she is old! Yes my child, I am old, and scarcely able to toil on as I have done. I cannot long. I fear that you will live to remember this with many a vain regret.'

The daughter was silent, and the weary, disappointed mother rose and left the room.

'I don't care,' said Kate, petulantly, as soon as the door was closed. 'I can't help it, if she does work. I don't think I ought to spoil my hands. A fine hand is one of the first points of beauty.' So it is, and as long as I can keep mine 'fine,' I shall. Mother's so inconsiderate. She might know that I wouldn't be fit for society, and would never be married in the world if my hands were disfigured with housework.'

A firm footstep sounded on the side walk, and Kate looked eagerly out. With a blush of pleasure she returned the bow of a fine looking young man who passed the house, and then, as if from a sudden impulse, turned back, ran up the steps, and rang the bell. Mrs. Palmer, as usual, attended the door.

When he entered the parlor, Horace Magna found Kate with one exquisite hand still supporting her head, and the other carelessly holding a magazine of fashion. She was just as beautiful—nay, more beautiful than when he had seen her from the street.

Her cheeks glowed with emotion; her soft eyes beamed him welcome from their clear, blue depths; her lily hand trembled to his, and the magazine fell beside her daintily slipped foot that rested on a velvet cushion.

But the light had quite faded from the young man's face. He had suddenly grown cold and distant. She was as graceful, as affable, as entertaining as ever, but Horace said little, and departed soon. He never called again. Kate's white hands had waited, and her blue eyes beamed in vain.

A year afterward Horace Magna married sweet Kitty Foster. Her hands were not white, nor even shapely; and she was very sensitive about them. Somehow, when they had been married a twelvemonth, Horace discovered that Kitty didn't like that he should look at her hands.

'How is this?' said he, playfully.—'What ails my Kitty? Ain't her dear little paws clean? or has she some long, sharp nails that I ought not to see?'

Kitty laughed till she cried, and then told him that her hands were so homely that she couldn't bear to have him look at them.

'If they were only beautiful, like Kate Palmer's,' said she wiping away her tears.

'Kitty, sit down here—I've something to tell you,' said he, clasping her two hands in one of his, and throwing his arm around her. 'I once thought Kate Palmer the loveliest girl I had ever seen. A great many other fellows thought the same, and I guess they all came to the conclusion that I did, eventually. Every expression of her face, every word of her lips carried the conviction to my mind that she was as lovely as she looked. But tipsie—so do faces! I didn't know it then, and while I admired her form and features, and voice and manner I admired her character equally. I have never seen anything, in nature, to compare with her hands; and Kitty—you don't care now, do you?—I wanted to put two rings on her beautiful fingers. Going down town one winter morning, I considered what sort of ring the first should be, and concluded that a diamond—a solitary, like your engagement ring, Kitty—would best suit her style, and probably her taste. Thus reflecting, I passed the house, and saw her sitting at the window, one beautiful hand up, so; as if waiting for my gift.

'Why not now?' said I, to myself, and turning, I went up, and rang the bell.

'The door was opened by a pale, toil-worn, gray haired woman who had always attended the door when I had been there. She said:

'My daughter, sir? she is in the parlor.'

'I looked at the mother. Poor soul! Her calico dress was old and faded; her apron soiled; her sleeves were rolled up and she wore no collar; her hair was disarranged, and her hands!—I don't know what they were like—worse than