

CARDOME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

By ANNA C. MINOGUE CHAPTER III

"This is probably our last meal alone," said Judge Todd, looking down the table to his wife and Virginia. "This afternoon brings Alice and Bessie, and to-morrow, the boys."

Before there was time for a reply a door flew open with a bang, and a pair of feet, in whirlwind flight, carried a fair young girl into the room. As she threw her arms about the neck of the surprised Judge, he exclaimed:

"My Heavens! Who's this?" Then he drew his visitor's pretty face to his and said, with a kiss: "Why, Bessie, my girl! When did you come and how?"

"Just this blessed minute!" she answered, resigning herself to the embraces of Mrs. Todd and Virginia. "But where is your mother?"

"I left her trying to extricate herself from the bundles and the carriage," said Bessie. "I told her to wait and I'd come back and help her, after I saw my old sweetheart; and she slipped her arm again around the Judge's neck and gave him another little hug."

As the Judge and Mrs. Todd left the table to meet their other visitor, Bessie drew up a chair, and after a gay welcome to old Abe, she said to Virginia:

"When we got to Lexington and I found we had so long to wait, I teased mamma into getting a carriage and driving over. When she comes in she'll tell them it was all my doings; but I believe the little hypocrite was just as anxious to get to Cardome as I."

Abe, who in common with the other slaves had a tender spot in his breast for this fair-like creature, who every summer danced into the old house from her far-away Southern home, and made sunshine wherever her happy voice fell, brought a plate and began to serve her. With the declaration that she was starving, she commenced her dinner, smiling up innocently at her mother when the latter entered.

"It is a shame, Love," said Mrs. Dupont, "to come down on you in this fashion; but I could not get my madcap daughter to wait in Lexington for the afternoon train. One would think the destiny of the nation depended on our getting here by one o'clock."

"The destiny of our dinner did, mamma," said Bessie. "You know what Owen Meredith says: 'Man may live without love, what's passion but pining? But where is the man who can live without dining?'"

"—or woman, either? Of course we had the hotel, but—oh, Judge, she broke off, 'you've had the dining-room repapered, haven't you?' It's just lovely. Our entire house needs to be repapered and painted, but mamma is becoming economical since all this dreadful talk of war has begun."

Virginia again this year. What became of that wild beast?" "No such terms as that, if you please!" exclaimed Virginia, with well assumed severity. "I took up Vindictive last fall after you left, and never sat a finer horse. You simply didn't know how to manage him."

"Miss Castleton, do you know I am one of the best horsewomen in Alabama?" said Bessie, not a smile on her face. "Vindictive was one of the wildest brutes that ever brought dishonor on the Cardome stables. And if he is meek and docile now, he is but another victim to the charms of the fair Virginia. But I tell you the leopard does not change his spots, nor Vindictive cast off entirely his inherited wickedness. Were I to mount him his heels would begin to fly with the force and velocity of a Mississippi mule, or he would try to do the cake-walk and outrival Mandy when she's most elaborate. Do you remember the day he wanted to turn somersault over the fence down into the Elkhorn? It was this way, she went on to the Judge, after a pause: "Tom thought Sambo hadn't made the girth secure enough, and he undertook to draw it tighter. I warned him to let the horse alone, as, for once, he seemed to be in something like a good temper. But that son of yours, Judge Todd, was about as headstrong as Vindictive. Now, Vindictive refused to be tampered with, and made Tom put a distance between him and those heels, which began to go like a buzz-saw. When he discovered that I had a whip and knew how to use it, he recovered his senses and began to walk as nature intended he should. Now," she concluded, with a smile rippling her face, "that's the sort of an animal Virginia wants me to believe she has won to the ways of righteousness."

"It was all the fault of the bit," said Virginia. "He quit acting ugly when I began to ride him with a different one. We shall take a ride this afternoon, and then you will be convinced. I have quite reformed Vindictive."

At 4 o'clock the big horse, whose erratic temper had honestly won for him the name Vindictive, and the pretty young mare the Judge had bought for Bessie, were brought around. As the girls mounted and rode down the broad drive, Virginia said, answering her companion's surprise at her former steed's lamb like conduct:

"It is an outrage to put a stiff bit in the mouth of a high-spirited animal, a positive cruelty to put it in the mouth of any horse. It plainly says to the horse it is a curb, an expression of the rider's distrust and fear. The loose bit implies confidence: and you know brutes are like fine souled people, they respect confidence and strive to make themselves worthy of it."

"Who suggested that method of taming Vindictive?" asked Bessie. "Phil," replied Virginia. "How goes he?" asked Bessie, smoothing her horse's mane with the handle of her whip. "He sends me his paper regularly, and, Virginia, I believe I've discovered the identity of his poet."

"Indeed?" said Virginia. "It is Phil himself." Virginia made no comment, and after a while Bessie added: "I am going to ask him about it when I see him."

"I shouldn't, Bess, if I were you," counseled Virginia. "If your surmise is correct, it is evident he has no wish to be discovered. My sweet, it may be that in those verses an overcharged heart finds surcease of sorrow." If you had no friend to whom you could pour out your woes, and you could express it in the writing of poems, and find relief in the expression, would you not think it cruel for one to attempt to deprive you of that comfort?"

"I hadn't looked at it in that way," said Bessie. "I should think the man who can write such pretty poems would like to be recognized as their author."

"But Phil McDowell is not like other men," said Virginia, in a lower voice. They rode on under the rows of great trees, and as they rode, chatted of the many little incidents that made up the whole of their happy, unclouded lives. The declining sun warned them it was time to retrace their way. As they turned they observed two horsemen approaching, and Virginia saw that one was riding the black charger that had stood before the Judge's office that morning. They were coming slowly and talking so earnestly that the girls were almost beside them before they were aware of their presence. Following a chivalrous custom that still exists in the South, where folk have time to be polite, the men bowed their heads and drew off their hats to the side of the road until the ladies had passed; after which the journey was resumed. In the one glance she allowed herself, Virginia's mind photographed, in tints that never fade, the face of the black steed's rider. A neck, rising up from the shoulders like a column, supported a proud and shapely head; the features stood out with that boldness the Romans gave their finest sculpture, without a trace of effeminacy, breathing the beauty of strength of mind and body; courage, moral and physical; a loftiness of purpose combined with a simplicity of manner that bespoke the great. A woman, looking on that face, would know she need never expect from its possessor the love that looks after the comfort of her dog and fetches her footstool; nor to see him become the meek husband who obsequiously defers to his lady. Courteous, because he was a gentleman; deferential, because he

was valorous; holding his friend not less sacred than his love, and his honor more sacred than either, he was one of those who reach a height not known to all, and only those who stand on the same plane with such men receive from them more than a passing thought. Even when some valiant woman-soul touches their level, still, with eyes fixed on the inaccessible, they often miss their companion spirit and feel themselves forever alone.

The world calls such men fools and dreamers, when the work to which they have given their lives falls in the promises of its fulfillment; but saints and heroes, when success nor Vindictive cast off entirely his inherited wickedness. Were I to mount him his heels would begin to fly with the force and velocity of a Mississippi mule, or he would try to do the cake-walk and outrival Mandy when she's most elaborate. Do you remember the day he wanted to turn somersault over the fence down into the Elkhorn? It was this way, she went on to the Judge, after a pause: "Tom thought Sambo hadn't made the girth secure enough, and he undertook to draw it tighter. I warned him to let the horse alone, as, for once, he seemed to be in something like a good temper. But that son of yours, Judge Todd, was about as headstrong as Vindictive. Now, Vindictive refused to be tampered with, and made Tom put a distance between him and those heels, which began to go like a buzz-saw. When he discovered that I had a whip and knew how to use it, he recovered his senses and began to walk as nature intended he should. Now," she concluded, with a smile rippling her face, "that's the sort of an animal Virginia wants me to believe she has won to the ways of righteousness."

"Who is that man?" asked Bessie, wondering on her young face. "Mr. Powell," returned Virginia. "Is he any relation to Mrs. Powell, of the Park?" further questioned the young girl. "Her husband was his grandfather. I believe," she was answered. Bessie thought a moment, then said: "That couldn't be, Virginia!" Afterward she laughed: "You silly! I was alluding to the other man."

Then Virginia remembered that there had been two men, but the face of the other she had not observed. "I have seen that man somewhere," she said, "but I can't remember where. It is a very hazy remembrance, still a remembrance." "It must be a dream, then," remarked Virginia. "Mr. Powell is staying at Willow-wild, and his companion may have been his host. He is a stranger here, who will know no one and whom, consequently, no one knows."

"But I have seen that man's face somewhere," insisted Bessie, with emphasis, and she rode on for a while in thoughtful silence. "Isn't it tantalizing!" she finally cried. "The recollection of where I have seen him fits across my brain, and eludes me just when I think I have it."

"I've heard of persons who went insane trying to overtake such shadowy things," said Virginia, with a light laugh. "Come, let us have a canter and see if you can catch your recollection between this and Cardome; if you can not, don't puzzle your pretty head further."

That night Bessie dreamed the strange man came to her, and, laying a cool hand on her brow, said in a voice remembered for its pain and sadness: "Child, your eyes are not clear enough yet!"

CHAPTER IV

The next daybreak found Cardome astray. Even Bessie, whose head rarely left the pillow until the day was at least two hours old, departed from her established rule. Mrs. Todd made brave efforts to conceal her nervousness, and invented many excuses for her unusually early appearance. One of them was the plea of gathering roses for her cousin Alice before the dew had dried on their fragrant faces, but she was surprised to find her relative before her in the flower garden. Then she confessed:

"Alice, I couldn't sleep since two o'clock. Will the hour never come that brings me my darling's?" And Alice Dupont, who was only seventeen years older than her daughter Bessie, took out her watch and playfully counted the hours until the train would be due at Midway. "There are six more hours, Love. How did you endure the months since Christmas?"

"I do not know," returned Mrs. Todd. "I said to the Judge this morning that I do not think I can let them leave me again. I never approved of their going so far. Kentucky has given the nation some of its greatest men, and, with a few exceptions, they were educated in their home schools; so I held these schools are good enough for our sons. But the Judge is so ambitious for them, and he imagines a Yale or Cambridge education carries a certain prestige. I have often thought of your happiness, who have never had your child from under your care."

"It is different with boys," said Mrs. Dupont. "It is necessary for them to learn to bear, while young, the weight life is fitting for their shoulders, so that when it is finally laid on them, there will be no cowardly shrinking. They are inured to endurance by college training. The man must stand alone; the woman is, more or less, a vine all her life."

"When she is forced into man's attitude, what a tower of strength she becomes!" exclaimed the elder woman, her eyes resting with admiration on the delicate face before her, the shadows on which were thrown by grief, not years.

Down in the quarters and in the kitchen there was no pretense made at concealing the excitement and joy awaiting each heart; for it is only as we advance toward a higher civilization that we learn to play hide-and-seek with ourselves. The home-coming of their young masters brought happiness to the faithful slaves. Not one of the men but had a surprise, or piece of news, in store for "the boys." The women had some treatment of choice bit of cookery, the surreptitious manufacture of their own fingers, laid away in secret places for "Marse Tom" or Marse Hal," according to their preference; while the children remembered that peanuts were always in evidence immediately after the return of the "young masters."

"Clear out dat yuh niggahs!" shouted Lize, the cook as she entered the kitchen that morning, brandish-

ing a large wooden spoon. "Ies jus' got to get at dat dinna. I know dat dem bressed chullun yain't had a fit meal sence las' Christmas."

It was with considerable difficulty that the field hands were got off that morning. Never before, the overseer thought, had their customary light duties taken so much time. Reluctantly, at length, the start was made, Pete bringing up the rear. He had a feeling in his heart that, after the family, "Marse Tom" would rather see him than any one else on the place, and he felt slightly aggrieved that the Judge had not remembered this, and sent word that Pete should be excused from work for that day; indeed, it was almost disrespectful to "the boys" that a holiday had been given in honor of their home-coming. But when he reached the clover field he swung into line with the other mowers, and with the cheery heart of his race was soon singing like his companions. Round after round they made of the great meadow, stopping at regular intervals to sharpen their narrow blades of steel. In another part of the field the rakers were also industriously working, and the swaths of clover, cut the day before, were, under their vigorously wielded forks, lifted into shocks. But toward ten o'clock Pete's restiveness returned, and with his eyes frequently on Cardome, he scythe more than once struck against the ground instead of running lightly along the thin stalks of grass. This happened again, when, meeting a rock, the blade broke with a snap. His neighbors interrupted their song to laugh at his discomfiture, then went on, with jeering pleasanties, while Pete stood disconsolate.

"What's the matter?" asked the overseer. "Look dah, Mistah Rice! Dah was only one rock in de fel' an' my blade hed to fin' it!"

"It was all your own carelessness," said the overseer, frowning. "That scythe was the best one I had, and I gave it to you because I thought you were careful. Now you'll have to use an old one. You'll have to go over to the warehouse for it yourself. I'm not going to take one of the better boys from his work to save you the trip. Step lively! and be back within twenty minutes," as he spoke he took out his big silver watch and marked the time.

"Yes sah!" said Pete, rejoicing at the prospect of getting to the house; his nimble feet soon carried him across the meadow and through the pasture land which led up to the orchard fence. As he was about to untangle the path, and at sight of him, she threw up her arms wildly and shouted:

"Fiah! Fiah!" "What yuh say?" shrieked Pete. "Wha's de fiah?" "In de kitchen! Run! Run!"

"If there is one word a negro fears more than ghosts it is fire. Peter felt every drop of blood in his veins run cold, but his duty as his master's house hold before him as sharp as if he had heard the command given. He turned and sped across the pasture and through the clover-field, making the workers pause in their occupation, until he reached the spot where the overseer stood.

"Oh, Mistah Rice," he shrieked. "de house am on fiah!" "What?" cried the overseer. "I met Mandy at de o'chard, comin' ovah byar, sence de house was on fiah, an' holleer'n fo me to run."

His hearer's face whitened. Glancing over the field and seeing that every slave was looking toward him, he waved his arm, and almost in an instant the entire force was near enough to hear as he shouted: "Cardome's on fire, boys! Run! Run!"

Still holding their scythes and pitchforks, that band of stalwart blacks sped down the clover-field and across the pasture land. Their wild ruck caused an instant stampede among the grazing steers. The thunder of the many feet, as the cattle plunged forward, was as the earthquake sound of an approaching storm. The orchard fence stopped them, and it appeared for a moment to the terrified overseer that they were about to dash back on the running negroes. Unheeding, the men continued their mad race for the gate.

The Judge was walking across the lawn from his office. As he saw the approaching band of mad looking blacks, armed with pitchforks and scythes, apparently bearing down upon him, for one moment his heart quailed. The paper he was then held in his hand, printed the day before in Cincinnati, closed one by one, and that day was rapidly approaching when the black slave population of the South, inspired as the Rebels of '76 had been, would rise as a man, and wreak swift, merciless, and just judgment on those who had deprived them of their God-given right. With the words still ringing in his brain, and that fierce-looking armed band before him, Judge Todd thought he was to witness the instant fulfillment of the prophecy. And that his heart trembled, for he was to them as a father. They were closing down on him, but he lifted his hand and said, authoritatively:

"Boys, what do you mean by this?" "De kitchen! De kitchen!" shouted Pete who had not seen his master. "Stop!"

Each negro heard that command, and at it they trembled, for never to the knowledge of one, had their master's voice so sounded. The overseer pushed to the front.

"Where's the fire, Judge?" he cried. "Fire!" repeated the Judge, moving back a few paces. "No where."

The overseer swore under his mustache, and then called Pete, who repeated Mandy's message. Judge Todd's brow clouded, as he said, as if to himself:

"Mandy again! This is more of her fun." Then remembering the grievous wrong he had done the faithful man by his thought, he said kindly:

"Boys, you needn't go back to the field till after dinner. The children will be coming in a little while, and I know you want to see them."

"Dat we sut'nly does, Judge," said they in one voice; then withdrew, excepting Pete. Mandy, who had viewed the running negroes with infinite amusement, felt a little fear as she received her master's summons to his office, but her natural boldness did not entirely desert her.

"Why did you do this, Mandy?" asked the Judge sternly. "Judge, I jes' couldn't help it. 'When I seed Pate walkin' dah, like's ef he owned de place, I jes' cluded I'd give him a skeer out of hisself, so I holleer'd 'Fiah!' When he ext me wha' de fiah was, I said, 'In de kitchen.' An' I s'posed de edit' ud know I meant it 'us in de stove. 'Steud ud dat he tooked to his heels on 'stad' to run like's ef it was be hind him."

"You may go, Mandy," said the Judge. "Once more, Mandy," he began, as the door closed behind the man, and mind me, it is the last time, I warn you to quit this joke-playing of yours. You knew Pete would naturally suppose you had been sent to call the field-hands. Even if you did not, why did you not follow him and explain to Mr. Rice that it was only a piece of your fun? Instead, you allowed those poor fellows to run that great distance in the heat, while you stood by laughing. I do not intend tolerating any more such conduct as this. Remember my words, girl, and don't try my patience too far. There is a limit to all things, even my patience with you."

"I's sorry Judge," she said taking her apron to her unmoistened eyes. "Well, that will do. You may go."

After closing the door securely, Mandy paused for a second, thrust out her tongue at the master who had permitted her to go unpunished, then spat contemptuously on the door. With this expression of her hatred she retraced her steps to the kitchen, a sullen frown on her face.

A silence hung between the two men, which was broken by the overseer, who said:

"Judge, there is more infernal mischief in that girl than is to be found in the entire quarters."

"I know it," said the Judge, the frown deepening on his brow, "but what can I do?"

"Get her out of here, said the overseer, with a quick motion of his hand. "She needs to be under a master who has his whipping post." The Judge shook his head.

"It is that fear that makes me keep her," he said. "She may demoralize some of the others," urged the overseer. "Ah, no," said the Judge, easily. "I don't think even Cassius M. Clay could cause disaffection on Cardome plantation. Although, candidly, Mr. Rice, when I saw them coming in with those scythes and pitchforks, I can not explain the feeling that crept into my heart."

of his mother, while he greeted his other son, who was following quickly. The first boy kissed his mother, Virginia, his cousins Alice and Bessie, and then came back to his father; the second repeated the operation, until he came to Bessie, who had now hidden in the shadowy wide hall.

"Hal, you're looking fine!" exclaimed Virginia, "you will surely disappoint Lize. She expects to see a pair of skeletons, and has prepared a dinner calculated to improve your looks immediately."

"I'm ready for anything Lize has ready for me," was the answer. "Haven't had anything like food since I was home last."

Then around the house, headed by the overseer, came the slaves. "Hello!" cried Hal. "Where's Tom?" At the sound of his name the other son came to the doorway, with Bessie's face, rosier that ever, appearing over his shoulder. "Here's the rest of the family come to see us," continued Hal. The two young men went to the lower step of the portico, while the negroes fied past, shook hands or ducked their bodies into courtesy, but with affection lighting up each black face. When all had paid their respects, Hal turned to his father and said:

"I say, father, give them a holiday? I tell you a holiday's a mighty fine thing."

Sunday was only two days off, Monday, his sixteenth anniversary, was to be observed on the plantation as a holiday, and every hour was mastered to secure the hay, yet the master gave the desired permission, for he could refuse this, his best-beloved son, nothing.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE NUN OF THE POOR

Posted up on the dining room door of the Grand Hotel at Ives-Gaines was a notice that could not fail to catch the passer's eye. As the stream of visitors drew near they paused, single or in groups, to read what was written on the door; and then passed on, commenting each in his own way upon what he or she had read.

"The Sisters in charge of the home for the aged will make a collection during dinner to-day."

It was a recognized institution and the habitues of the place accepted it as such; but some of the newcomers began grumbling at the continued calls that seemed to be made upon their purses.

"What bad luck!" said one lady, turning to her neighbor. "If only that stupid collection had been just a day later I should have escaped it. My cure ends to-morrow."

"Then, on the contrary, I think you are lucky, even in spite of the collection during dinner to-day."

The Italian officer, who sat at the end of the long table, as he quietly watched the gray clad figure coming toward him, wondered what was familiar to him in the graceful dignity of the younger Sister's movements. But his musings were rudely interrupted by the voice of his neighbor, the professor. The little Sister had held her plate out to him with the usual form of request.

that there are also many who, after working all their lives, find themselves destitute in their old age through no fault of their own. Besides, there are many who could not get work; or who, getting it, could not do it from ill health or for other reasons."

"You are a believer in luck, I gather?" said his neighbor, who had not yet taken part in the discussion. "To a certain extent I am," answered the officer. "And you, sir—what do you think about this collection?"

"You ask my opinion, do you?" repeated the professor—for professor he was, writ large on every line of his shriveled sallow face. "My opinion is that those who are determined to get on, do so, sooner or later, no matter what obstacles may arise in their paths. As for so-called charitable institutions, I consider them superfluous and undesirable. They are mere harbors for imposters, beginning with those who undertake the management."

Before the officer had time to dissociate himself from sentiments so contrary to his own, a priest, who up to this had sat in silence, bent forward and addressed the professor with a quiet courtesy.

"Let us hope, professor," he said, "that you may never come to see the charity of such imposters."

The advent of another group of visitors, full of gossip concerning a Russian grand duke who had arrived at Ives the previous day, changed the conversation abruptly; and in a moment everyone was busy discussing the prince and his suite; after which the Russian dancers, the leader of the latest ballet at the Casino, and finally the never-ending theme of luck and play at the gaming tables served in turns as topics of conversation.

The distasteful subject of the collection had been for the moment forgotten when the door of the dining-room opened to admit two of the Sisters whose work had given rise to such adverse criticism. The elder of the two was tall and pale, and her businesslike directness showed that long she had inured her to some extent to the unpleasantness of her task. To the younger it was evidently an ordeal that nothing less than heroic obedience could have made her face. Her long lashes dropped on the wild rose flush of her cheeks, and her little white hands trembled as she held her empty plate toward the person nearest to her. In spite of the previous grumblings, most of the guests were generous in their contributions, and notes and silver soon arose in giddy piles on both plates. The formula of thanks of the elder nun was repeated by the younger and she forgot some of her agonizing shyness in the thought that her beloved old people would have all they needed now for some time to come.

"A donation for our old people, for God's sake, please!"

With an intentionally ironical bow, the man had drawn his purse and had laid a single cent amongst the other money.

"That," he said in a contemptuous tone, "is all I feel called upon to give to idlers and drunkards—and fools." He had raised his voice and the exaggerated contempt that he put into the last word drew attention to the fact that he intended to include in it the Sister herself as well as the poor.

As the professor spoke the Italian officer sprang to his feet, and the on-lookers caught the flash of anger in his eyes as he bent in a bow before the little nun.

"I am sorry, Sister," he said, laying a golden Louis on the five centime piece, "that I cannot afford any more for your admirable charity. I should be honored," he continued, "if you would allow me to shake hands with you."

The professor's insulting words had apparently left the Sister unmoved; but as, for an instant, she raised her eyes to this young man who had courage enough to make himself the champion of the servants of God, he saw that tears were trembling on her lashes. But this he noticed only subconsciously; for as she looked up he realized why she had brought back to him a winter, some three or four years gone by, which he had spent in Rome.

"Mademoiselle de B—"