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CARDOME

## A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

By ANNA C. MINOQUE

## CHAPTER I

Cardome stood red-walled among its pine trees, a picture of country quiet and prosperity. The gently undulating fields of waving blue-grass, broken at intervals by long clover meadows, stretched away to where flower gardens and shrub-dotted lawns marked the beginning of the village of Georgetown, whose slender spires and occasional domes blended mistily in with the belt of woodland that made a purple southern horizon.

Through Cardome's fertile pasture lands wound the Elkhorn, adding much beauty to the view from the mansion, where Virginia Castleton, from her place on the side veranda, had twice lifted her eyes from the quaintly bound volume lying on her lap, to gaze dreamily on the river's rippled surface. Twenty summers had passed over her head, and each had added rarer charm to the beauty of her face, brought richer gifts to heart and mind. There was not a gentleman in the three adjoining counties who had not, at some time, responded to the toast, "The Fair Virginia!" and not one but would have gone valiantly to his death to prove his devotion to her and to what she so finely represented—grace, beauty, and pure womanliness.

Virginia reigned supreme at Cardome. Related to neither its master nor mistress, having on their affection only the claim of a dead friend's child, she was as a daughter of the house; the two handsome sons, now at an eastern college, were not dearer to the old Judge and his wife.

She had returned from a month's visit in Versailles only the day before, and Cardome was beginning to regain its tranquillity after the excitement and jubilation of her coming. Soon the summer guests, relatives and friends, would arrive, and there was a ripple of expectation in the atmosphere that made reading a little difficult for Virginia that morning. The book was one received by the Judge during her absence, a book written at Cardome—from its foundation, more than a half century before, the hospitable haven for litterateurs and artists. As he had placed it in her hands that morning, before going to his little brick office at the foot of the side lawn, he had assured her that she would find between its covers much that was original and instructive. But neither the title-page nor the brief introductory note appeared to offer confirmation of the Judge's encomium, and she was prone to gladden her eyes with the sun-kissed face of the Elkhorn, showing between the wide opening of the trees, and to listen to the sound of busy feet and the occasional laughter of the slaves, that came from the house.

A horse's hoof beats coming in an easy, light gallop over the white road below, sounded through the summer stillness. The trees edging the road hid the rider and his steed, but the fall of the plated hoofs on the wooden floor of the bridge, a moment later, told the direction whence they were coming. Seldom an hour but many such galloping feet crossed the bridge, bearing riders to and from Georgetown, and Virginia felt no special interest in this horseman, not even when he turned in at Cardome's stone pillared gateway.

"It is one of the Judge's clients," she thought, waiting for the rider to appear around the clump of young cedars that hid the entrance from her view.

The next instant horse and rider flashed across her line of vision. The horse, whose black coat shone in the sunlight, and whose glossy neck did not require a light rein to keep it in its proud curve, came up the gravel drive as he had covered the stone road, and turning like a racer where the way curved toward the Judge's office, stopped, at a slight motion from his master's hand, directly at the doorway. The two great dogs which lay on the low veranda before the office rose as the rider swung himself from his horse, and advanced to greet him in a friendly fashion. The watching girl saw that he was young, tall, and well formed.

The knock on the office door, while not loud, was decisive, and corresponded with the fall of the feet on the veranda, sending the ring of silver spurs to her across the side-lawn where the one flower-bed lay in the center of greenward, circled by a broad gravel walk. The door was opened quickly; and before it closed she caught the Judge's cordial tones giving his visitor welcome; then silence again reigned. The dogs took their old position near the plain wooden supports of the veranda roof, and with their heads erect, stared at the black horse, which, had he been chiselled out of stone, could scarcely have appeared as immovable. With the temper his eyes and arched neck proclaimed, he should have been pawing the earth, impatient of delay; as it was, he stood almost without the movement of a muscle, awaiting his master's return. The dogs dropped their heads on their forepaws the rest and sunshine to drowse the horse, or at least make his neck release its proud curve; but he kept his statue like position until, half an hour later, the door opened and the master appeared. The Judge accompanied his visitor and clasped his hand warmly at parting. Vaulting lightly into his saddle, with the slightest movement the young man turned his horse's head, and waving his hand gracefully toward the Judge rode away in a gallop, as he had come. The Judge looked after the retreating figure until the cedars hid him, then went back to his office, while Virginia strained her eyes for a last glimpse of the steed and his rider. She thought she knew all the young gentlemen who lived sufficiently near to pay the Judge a call this early in the day, yet here was one with whom she was unacquainted; nor could she remember having heard that there were any strangers visiting in the neighborhood.

"Who can he be?" she mused, drawing her fine black eyebrows together in a puzzled frown; the more she thought, the more intense became her interest in the stranger and the greater her curiosity to learn his name. It was not yet 10 o'clock, and she knew the dinner bell alone would bring the Judge from his office, where, morning after morning, he sat engaged in straightening out the difficulties of half the legally distressed in the county, the other half being promiscuously distributed among the lawyers of Georgetown.

When he voluntarily retired from the office of county judge, bestowed upon him term after term by the unanimous vote of the people, John Todd had fully determined to give up all legal work and spend the remainder of his days in the repose his years of public service had earned. He had mapped out for his afternoon of life a line of literary pursuits, with, as interlude, intercourse with the congenial men and women he would then be able to gather around him more frequently in Cardome. But a widow came one day to the wide hall door with a piteous tale of injustice; and the next court's sitting saw its ex-judge at the bar, pleading the cause of the poor woman against one of the town's richest citizens. Next a friend who had appealed to him in grave trouble drew him from his seclusion; another came with a similar story, and another; then in a moment of inner illumination, the truth came to Judge Todd—that he may not do what we wish with ourselves; so he built the little brick office, announced that he had reconsidered his decision, and began again the practice of law.

To his office came rich and poor, young and old, seeking advice, and always legal, receiving assistance not always rendered before a jury. Gradually he was drawn back into politics, which he had also forewarned; and while refusing to enter into any contest himself, he threw all his old-time energy into the conflict where a friend needed him or his party demanded the service of its supporters. Yet often in moments of victory, whether legal or political, he wished instead for the quiet ways, and turned from congratulatory voices to listen to the whispering in his heart that would draw him far from the tumult and the crowd. His sense of duty prevailed, however, and regularly at 9 o'clock, his two dogs by his side, he went down the broad walk which led to his office door; and there only clients were supposed to disturb him.

Virginia was well aware of this unuttered law, yet as she sat in the sunshine with the last echo of the black horse's hoofs dying on the air, she was debating whether the Judge would be annoyed if for this once it were broken, and she invaded his sanctuary. She should not care to meet the keen blue eyes if the shaggy brows were drawn above them in a frown; but she thought he could scarcely grow offended with her so soon after her return to his home, so, rising from her comfortable seat, she tripped lightly down the wooden steps, pausing as she passed the bush to gather a moss-rose. Then, lifting her dainty summer skirts, she went forward and tapped lightly on the door; but without waiting an invitation, opened it and cried playfully:

"Ho, Sir Advocate! May this client enter?"

Judge Todd looked up quickly; instead of the frown she half expected, he smiled and said:

"Does she come for legal advice?"

"Verily, she doth," rejoined Virginia; whereat the Judge rose and, bowing with gravity, bade her enter, while he drew forward a comfortable chair.

"What service can I render the fair Virginia?" he asked, looking very solemn, but with a twinkle in his blue eyes, bright as two bits of azure sky.

"I seek your advice on an intricate question," said Virginia. "When may a woman not exercise her prerogative of asking questions?"

"Never!" immediately replied the gallant Judge, and joined the girl in her laugh. "Well," he then asked, noticing the volume she held in her hand, "how do you like Vinton's little work?"

"Ah, Judge," she said, "what made your friend write such a gloomy book?"

"I should not call it gloomy," was the reply, "unless you so call truth. How far have you read?"

She leaned forward, and laying the open book on his desk, pointed with one tapering finger to the first line on the third page.

"You should not judge a book by its opening paragraphs," he said. "If you had read a little further you would have come upon a strong and uplifting thought. Listen to it."

"You are forgetting my prerogative," put in Virginia, who had no

desire just then to hear the thought her friend considered so superior. "To be allowed to ask questions implies that they will be answered. You have not told me how it happens your friend came by such sombre ideas at Cardome."

It was noticeable that when one thus alluded to Cardome, which the Judge loved almost as his own flesh and blood, a change, swift as it was beautiful, would show on the old face. That sudden illumination came now, and instead of replying to her words, he said:

"Virginia, I never heard but one say 'Cardome' as you say it; and that one is dead."

"That is because I love it as he did," she answered quickly, knowing he referred to her father. "I sometimes think, Judge," she went on, "that in dying he poured out the love he felt for this place, his friend's home, on my young heart. His last words to me were: 'May it ever be to you, Virginia, as it has been to me, indeed, Cara Donna!'"

"Oh! may it ever, ever!" said the Judge, fervently, looking into her fair young face.

Often through the bitterness of the years that followed did Virginia recall those words, that hour, the little office, its shelves of law books, with the young mosses she had between her fingers pouring its rich fragrance over the unlighted place.

"What made him gloomy?" asked the Judge, presently, reverting to her question to relieve the moment's tension. "Child, I do not find him so; but then, I have forgotten what it is to feel young. Don't you know I shall be sixty next Monday? A man at sixty finds nothing gloomy when he is told that we weave our webs only to destroy them ourselves, or have them destroyed for us. He pities the fingers that must take up the broken strands, and is grateful for such uplifting hopes as my friend here gives."

He turned his eyes to the open page, but Virginia, anticipating his intention of reading it aloud for her, asked:

"Is your friend coming back to Cardome?"

"He writes that he will see me and Cardome again, but when he does not know," answered the Judge. "His checked career is closing as inauspiciously as it began," and he proceeded to tell her of the life and work of his literary friend. Gradually, however, and diplomatically, Virginia brought him from the past to the present and gossiped of the coming guests, some of whom would be with them on the morrow. Then with the suggestion—

"None of your many clients seem to have remembered you this morning!" She felt that she had him at a place where, as a matter of course, he would refer to his one visitor. But, for the first time since her entrance, he seemed to remember that it was office hours and that the moments thus passing belonged to others.

"No," he replied, "but I have plenty to keep me employed; and he glanced toward the pile of documents on his desk. Virginia smiled to herself and asked carelessly:

"Who was that young gentleman who called on you this morning? I do not remember ever having seen him."

"I do not believe you have met him. That was Henry Clay Powell of Bourbon, son of Walter Powell, your father's friend."

A silence followed the words. The Judge's eyes rested unconsciously on the dying mosses rose Virginia held lightly, and she looked, as unconsciously, at the Judge's white head, mentally repeating the name. Finally she asked:

"He did not come from Bourbon to-day did he?"

"Oh, certainly not," said the Judge. "He is stopping in the neighborhood, with a friend of his father. His father is a relative of ex-Governor Powell, and his mother was a cousin of Henry Clay. Now that makes him a kin of yours," he concluded, a smile on his face.

Virginia laughed. "If all my Clay relatives could be got together, the big front lawn could not accommodate them," she said. "However, I don't claim relationship with all bearers of the name, since I have come to know so many who are a discredit to it."

"Henry Clay Powell is not of those," said the Judge, slowly. "He is, in every respect, worthy of the name he bears."

"Will he remain long here?" asked Virginia.

"I do not know how long after Monday," replied the Judge. "I have asked him to take dinner with us Monday, my birthday, you remember, and which Love insists shall be kept as a holiday on the plantation. It's well she stopped this side of a barbeque," and he laughed softly.

"You deserve all the respect we can show you!" cried Virginia, the love she felt for this man, who had been to her father what David was to Jonathan, brimming her eyes.

The fall of a horse's feet was heard on the drive. "A sure enough client coming!" exclaimed the girl, rising quickly. "For your advice, Sir Advocate, here is a rose!" and she laid the flower on the open book.

The sweetest payment I have ever received," said the chivalrous old man, escorting her to the door. As he opened it they met a tall gentleman crossing the narrow veranda, whose greeting Virginia returned distantly, while the Judge said, warmly extending a welcoming hand:

"Why, Dallas! Good-morning. I am glad to see you."

CHAPTER II.

Virginia walked slowly back to the house, her heart entertaining a feeling of annoyance against the newcomer as strong as it was unreasonable. Once she and Dallas had been, in the general acceptance of the word, fairly good friends; but that was when he was paying his devotions to pretty Miss Menefee; now that his devotion had been transferred to herself, she found him intolerable; for it is characteristic of a woman that the man she likes as an acquaintance often grows hateful as a lover. It was two years since—honorably or dishonorably, for Miss Menefee was reticent on the subject and the truth of the affair was not known—their engagement had been broken off, and he had immediately become one of the "Fair Virginia's" admirers. He had never made an open declaration of his love, but she felt that he was only biding his opportunity; and there came over her at times a chilling realization that Fate would play into his hands, and that she would be powerless to resist. In such moments it seemed as if the finger of her Destiny were plainly raised before her eyes, and pointed toward Howard Dallas.

Yet he was not an ill-favored man; rather the contrary. He was tall, and if not as well-proportioned as the majority of Kentuckians, lack of bone and muscle in his case produced a grace of appearance inclining to the artistic; which impression was heightened by the contour of his face, the sleepy expression of the almond-shaped hazel eyes, and the soft chestnut hair, worn rather long and brushed back from his low square forehead. His manner was not less pleasing than his person. Educated, urbane, wealthy, the head of a sociable home, he took his rightful place in the elegant society of the neighborhood, and many a young girl envied Virginia his unregarded devotion.

Virginia was not given to self-analysis, so she did not seek below the surface for the mainspring of her dislike, growing the stronger with his persistence. As plainly as she could, she strove to make him understand that she had nothing for him, not even her friendship. Howard Dallas read every word of her action, and he set his even white teeth, while he repeated a vow he had made long before. Those who knew him best could tell when he made a vow he kept it.

"He's like the wrong end of a gun; better not be fooled with it," said Virginia's best friend, Phil McDowell, who edited a paper in Frankfort and rode to Cardome twice a week to discuss politics with the Judge over their cigars and talk for an hour afterward with her, as they sat together on the moon-lighted veranda. How much he meant of this light, pleasing talk it were hard to say, for he was like his own Kentucky River, which shows a clear, smiling surface, but with an under-current opaque enough to hide its channel from curious eyes, leaving it doubtful if beneath its golden sand or rise up jutting rocks. There was a column, however, in his paper in which little poems of good literary workmanship appeared from time to time, whose sentiment touched Virginia because of the pathos of the truth they revealed. At first she had teased Phil to tell her the author's name, and finally he stated that the column was under the editorship of a friend, who also wrote the verses she so much admired; but that he could not reveal the identity of his associate.

"He is very shy. He would die of confusion if he thought any one suspected he wrote poetry," he had said, and when the poor fellow trusts me so implicitly I cannot betray his confidence."

"Why don't you bring him over with you, some day?" she had urged. "He need not know that I have been apprised of the fact that he is a poet."

Phil promised to give his friend her invitation, but when next he came to Cardome he was, as usual, alone.

"I could not get the post to come," he explained to her as they sat on the southern veranda full upon them. "He has heard of that sorcerer, the 'Fair Virginia,' and dare not venture within her domain, lest her beauty would transform him into a singing-bird to a dog, fawning at her feet."

She turned her blue-gray eyes full on the man by her side, and said, after looking at him for a moment:

"Perhaps a man thinks he pays a woman a compliment when he likens her power to Circe's. All of us do not find it such, for we know that often man's blindness makes the transformation, not the woman. A man should not permit himself to be changed from a singing bird into a dog."

Phil regarded the moon for a full minute silently; then he said, slowly:

"That is so. But the post will keep himself on his own low tree. He sends you this message, however: that his songs have given you a little pleasure makes them priceless in his eyes."

"I think," said Virginia, "your poet knows how to flatter as well as how to sing."

"No," he answered her gently, "his definition of a poet is truth-teller, light-bringer. It is a long call from that to a flatterer."

But later there had come to Virginia a doubt as to the existence of the poet, or rather she had a fear that she had discovered him, and that her singing-bird was leaving his tree. As she returned to the veranda that morning she saw the Frankfort paper lying on the little wicker stand which held her work-basket. As her eyes ran over the columns she caught

a paragraph which stated that Henry Clay Powell, of Bourbon, was a visitor at Willow-wild, once the home of his ancestors. Willow-wild lay between Cardome and Frankfort, and after many years of desertion was now occupied by an unknown gentleman, who lived alone, but for two servants, in the old house. He had from the first held himself back from his neighbors with an aloofness which they respected; for assuming that he had retired from his own home to sever intercourse with society, they forbore thrusting theirs upon him. He had now been at Willow-wild for two years, and this was his first visitor.

As Virginia sat absorbed in her reading, a slave girl, with a small tub of water balanced on her head, emerged from the library. This was Mandy, the irrepressible, the Judge's wife called her; but the Judge believed that only the spirit of infernal mischief could father the pranks which she, in seeming innocence, would play. A step elevated the library above the veranda. Now Mandy missed it and fell, sending the contents of the tub in a sudden shower over the floor, upon which she also came down heavily.

"My gracious!" cried Virginia, springing up and retreating toward the hall, "what have you done now, Mandy? As the negro made no motion to rise, she asked kindly across the waxy space, "Have you hurt yourself?"

"Law, no Miss 'Ginia!" she answered, "but I've just skered out of my life to git up an' pear afore old Abe." (Abe was the butler, and between the two there was enmity.)

"You seed," she continued, placing her hands on her fat sides, for inward laughter was convulsing her. "Abe, he jes' da minit got de poach' robe," scrubbed it till de paint mos' come off, an' he's feul things layin' in stob tub de poison which 'stroys his work. I heard 'him swab feul' at de end fur jes' lookin' 'cross it," and rolling her eyes until only the whites were visible she added: "Dat accordin' angel, what Mis' Love told us 'bout las' Sunday, must be pretty busy a keepin' up to ole Abe's tunes."

"Sweep off the water Mandy," said Virginia, "and he will not know any thing about it." But the girl only laughed impudently.

"You doan ketch dis chile cleanin' ole Abe's poach'. I jes' leave dat watah for a sprin' p'aty for him, w'en he comes 'long in his blue coat an' brass buttons. Syc're de Law, dan he's comin'!" She bounded to her feet, snatched up her tub, and was down on the veranda steps and well around the house before Abe appeared in the doorway which opened from the "Court."

"Who's done gone on?" splined my poach' he cried, not seeing Virginia standing in the door.

"Oh, Abe, I'm so sorry," she said stepping forward. "But it was an accident. Poor Mandy missed her step coming from the library, which she had been cleaning, and fell. Your poach' did look so clean and pretty too; but if you bring me a broom, I will sweep the water off," she added, for she saw the old negro was becoming angry. The words appeased him, and he waved his long arm chivalrously.

"Yoh go 'way dah, Miss 'Ginia!" he said. "Yoh 'tink I've gwine to let yoh wet dem lil' feet ob yohn? No, m'am! and rolling up his blue trousers and divesting himself of his brass buttoned coat, he was soon at work with mop and broom."

"Mandy was afraid you would be angry with her, Abe," Virginia went on, "and I was certain you wouldn't be when you heard it was an accident."

Down in his heart there was a suspicion it was only a part of Mandy's mischief, but "Miss 'Ginia's" word was always as Gospel to the negroes, and the greatest liar on the plantation, telling at the "quarters" the most wonderful of his falsehoods, found his story never questioned if he had the forethought to remark, in introduction, that "Miss 'Ginia" had told it in his hearing."

Presently Mrs. Todd came from the hall, and laying her hand affectionately on the girl's arm, said:

"I forgot to tell you, Virginia, that I had note the other day from Mrs. Powell, informing me that a young cousin of hers from Covington, I think she said, is at the Park to make it her future home. I waited until your return before calling, and then forgot all about it until a little while ago. We had better go this morning, for I am expecting Cousin Alice and Bessie on the evening train. Run off, dear, and change your dress, while I order a carriage. We can make it before dinner, can't we?"

"Oh yes, Aunt Love, easily," said Virginia, hurrying away.

Thirty years before, when she was the belle of Versailles, Mrs. Todd was known among her friends as "Lovely Idalla," not alone for the beauty of her face, but also for the amiable qualities of her heart. When she married the Judge, who was ten years her senior, and came to rule in Cardome, she found that her title had preceded her, only he had poetically shortened it to "Love."

But her first ten years of married life had been crossed by a sorrow which left its lines on the wife's young brow and made the white hairs to outnumber the brown ones, that sorrow which never leaves the heart of her who has watched the coffin-lid slip between her agonized eyes and the faces of her dead children. Three years had passed since the last pattering feet had grown strangely still, and another little grave had been made in the Todd lot in Georgetown Cemetery, when twin boys came

to the bereaved hearts; and as their years rounded on joy came back to Cardome, which had at last heirs to its proud possessions. These were the sons, within one year of their majority, whom the mother's heart was impatiently waiting the morning to bring from an Eastern college.

"In my heart," said Mrs. Todd, as the carriage rolled down the pine-guarded drive on its way to the Park, which stood back in gloom and solitude (from the White Sulphur turnpike, "I feel sorry for the young girl who has come to make her home at Mrs. Powell's."

"Perhaps it will be different now that she is here," rejoined Virginia. "Mrs. Powell will surely not ask her cousin to sink into her own isolation. Perhaps the old time gaiety of which I have heard you speak will be renewed."

Mrs. Todd shook her head. "Never, while the Park is ruled by those hands," she said, and a shudder ran over her comely face and seemed to penetrate her very tones. Virginia remained silent, for she knew that none of the elder people cared to speak of the tragedy which the early life of Mrs. Powell had known. "Things were not right, they knew. There had been love, disloyalty, perhaps, and it was said, revenge, but their thoughts or suspicions were kept from the young; and if they spoke of these things to their companions, it was now with pitiful charity. Yet the community could never shake off the remembrance of the lone mistress of the Park, who lived among them, and yet had voluntarily and determinedly put herself apart from them. There was, also, an uneasy feeling that the ears which were supposed to hear little else than the moaning of her majestic trees, or the chatter of her slaves, were in some way informed of the smallest happenings in their world; that the neatly gloved hands, ever lying idly in her lap, were invisibly working among them, and that something in their hearts told them that working was not for good.

"De debbill' in dem wooden hands!" Virginia's waiting woman had once exclaimed, talking of the mistress of the Park; and when chided for such a remark, she had repeated solemnly: "De debbill' in dem wooden hands, Mis' 'Ginia. I've neeah fifty dan yoh air, honey, an' I've seed some dat workin' an' it was de debbill' workin'."

Recollection of these words went with Virginia that morning over the smooth road, under the still branches of the trees that made shady the rolling lawn of the Park, and they seemed repeated in her ears as the grave, white haired negro ushered the unexpected visitors into the second parlor, where Mrs. Powell sat. A volume was on the table before her, but a small slave stood by her chair to turn its pages; for the hands, neatly gloved, lying in her lap, were useless; they were wooden hands. She rose at the entrance of her callers, and greeted them, but without moving forward, for those hands had no welcoming clasp to give.

When they were seated she bade the boy summon her cousin. "Of course," she said to Mrs. Todd, "it is she you called to see. Yes, I know what you would say," she continued, before her visitor could reply: "I fear I have neglected my social duties, but there are so many things to attend to on the plantation, and all else must give way to them."

That was her never-failing excuse for her retirement; for the pride that had ruined her own life, and others, would not allow her to admit to the world that Fate had chosen her and left her a bankrupt, thrown upon the utter mercy of Time.

"You see, I have made a change again on the side lawn," she said, looking out of the window that opened toward the south. "The old arrangement was, after all, the better one, and I find myself more satisfied now that its familiar face shows again through the window. I think it prettier to have your flowers in view of your best apartments. That was one of the many things I liked about Cardome; the flowers were not kept in one place, like a merchant's display in a shop window, but were made to show around where they would be most effective. I suppose you have not changed the arrangement?"

"You know the Judge thinks Cardome and all its appointments too perfect to admit of change," replied Mrs. Todd, with a laugh. "Every thing is still as it used to be."

"The Judge is well, I suppose?" inquired Mrs. Powell. "And the boys, also?"

Mrs. Todd replied that they were, adding happily: "The boys will be home to-morrow."

"And I suppose the gay doings will begin?" said Mrs. Powell. Then, as if for the first time becoming aware of her presence, she turned her small, piercing eyes on Virginia, and remarked, after a moment's close scrutiny:

"Virginia shows a more striking resemblance to her father with each passing year. Do you remember him?" she asked of the girl.

"Yes," said Virginia, a shadow crossing her eyes.

"He was too noble a man for child or friend ever to forget," said Mrs. Todd.

A sinister smile played around Mrs. Powell's thin lips, but she made no reply; but after a moment's silence, she said: "I wonder what is detaining Clarisse? Or, perhaps, keeping one's callers waiting is counted good manners in Cincinnati."

"I thought she was from Covington?" remarked Mrs. Todd.

"She was born there, but is, it seems to me, an Ohioan both by education and mode of living. She will make her home with me if she finds it agreeable," Mrs. Powell went on to explain. "I should be glad to have her remain with me, so I trust my place among them." This was said with the proud, quiet dignity of one who might have "lapsed from a noble place," but who never forgot that she could receive no favors, that what she desired to ask was only her due.

"Ah, no!" said Mrs. Todd, quickly, "your place is yours always. But we will give your protegee the one next yours, the one that a daughter might look for from the friends of her mother."

No appreciation of this answer appeared on the ironlike, thin, wrinkled face as she looked from her guests toward the window, showing the nocking sun roses and a bed of young forget-me-nots.

"I shall give a lawn fete soon in her honor," she said, in the same even metallic tones; "I suppose I may count on your assistance on that occasion? As she spoke the door opened and her protegee entered, enlaid on face and in manner.

In the narrow circle in which she had hitherto moved, Clarisse Sears had been called a beauty; but this tribute she might not expect here where a finer, more classic type prevailed. Her hair was black and lustreless. The heaviness of the lower jaw corresponded with the fleshy forehead in proclaiming a vapid character, slow and ponderous; the woman who crushes into a flower garden as if a stone flagged yard were beneath her feet, heartlessly picks a rose to pieces and cruelly holds it butted by its delicate wings. The eyes were remarkably large and well-formed, of a shade between dark hazel and brown; but their whites showed a slight yellowish tinge that a Southernerner looks at askance. Her manner was listless, which might have been attributed to ill-health or indolence.

It was evident that she considered herself somewhat in advance, practically and theoretically, of the people among whom she had about decided to cast her lot, and Virginia was surprised into amusement on several occasions during the brief call by evidences given of this superciliousness. As she and Mrs. Todd drove away from the Park, and the latter asked what she thought of Miss Sears, Virginia replied, with a shade of annoyance in her tones:

"I wish the dear Sisters had her at Nazareth for a year, to teach her manners and the ordinary requirements of polite society."

TO BE CONTINUED

BIG CHIEF AND LITTLE CHIEF

AN INCIDENT OF RESERVATION LIFE

By James Escott

Indian summer? Well yes, that is could live with any degree of comfort under that torrid sun as best down prairie. We are at least two miles from the nearest station and in the center of a seemingly boundless prairie. Alone? Let us see. A small cloud of dust is disappearing in the north, the direction of the reservation, and that is all. "Let's stop," said my companion, reining in his tired pony.

"What! are you crazy," I panted, "stop here under this sun! Man, are you in your senses?"

"How far have we come?" and Brother James looked back wearily over his shoulder in the direction of the railroad.

"Two and a half miles at least," I answered, drawing in my own steed and inwardly anything but pleased with the delay. "Why? You're not going back, so soon?" this in my most sarcastic tones. "Give the place a trout before you judge. What would they think of you giving up before you even got to it. You volunteered, didn't you? Besides your superiors have sent you, and—"

"Father, please don't. I know all that; but I never knew, I never anticipated anything like this. Five miles of this jolting and—"

"Oh, ho! you'll soon get used to that," I broke in encouragingly, "I admit it's a sore point at first, but—"

"And this sun—"

"Only during summer, my boy; we have twenty below around Christmas."

Brother James shifted his position—he had done so a thousand times since we started—and turned again in the direction of the mission.

"This will never do, Brother," I said, making a pass with my whip at his pony's flanks, which set the little beast off towards home, and Brother James had nothing to do but follow.

We had scarcely settled down to a swinging pace, when my companion, who, with head sunken upon his chest, was several lengths in the rear, cried out:

"Stop, Father!"

I was tempted not to heed him, but the tone of the command had something strange in it, and I turned my head just in time to see him slide off his pony and fall on his knees in the tall grass.

I was at his side just as he lifted from the tall grass what, to the initiated, would seem but a large bundle of birch bark, but which to the missionary meant another little soul cast out to perish, and in all probability unbaptized.

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