Chickamauga.

BY CAPT. F. A. MITCHEL, LATE U.S.A.

AUTHOR OF "CHATTANOOGA" ETC.

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[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XII.

A CHANGED ENEMY.

Corporal Ratigan had been worked up to such a fever of excitement by the chase and his complicated feelings toward the object of it that when he shot over the rise in the ground that hid the fugitive from his view his visage was distorted from the expression of good nature usually stamped upon it to one which can only be called demoniac. His eyes were wild, that portion of his hair which extended below his forage cap seemed to glow with unusual redness, his body leaned forward like a jockey in a race, the whole forming a picture of eager ferocity. In short, Corporal Ratigan resembled an escaped lunatic chasing a flying fiend who had been torturing him.

On the crest of the second rise he strained his eyes after Miss Baggs. Nothing appeared to denote her presence on the landscape except a horse in harness, which he dragged in the dust, trotting back toward a heap of rubbish on the road. A sudden dread took possession of the corporal. It was plainly evident there had been an accident. He had been chasing a Confederate telegraph stealer that he might turn her over to the military authorities of his own army to be hanged, and now he was suddenly plunged into terror for fear she had been killed. He went on, but with a new object distinct in his mind. It was not to injure Miss Baggs, but to succor her.

He soon came to the heap of splinters and iron which marked the point of collapse of Miss Baggs' buggy. Miss Baggs was not visible. Had she taken to the wood beyond the fork of the road? For a moment there was a delightful sense of relief, but it was soon followed by the animal instinct of the savage chasing an object of prey. Stimulated by this, or a return of a sense of duty, or both, he was about to ride into the wood, when, looking down on the long grass by the roadside, he descried the unconscious body, the face apparently white in death, of the woman he sought.

In a moment the corporal was off his horse and on his knees beside her. The chase in which he had been so eager and the cause were both forgotten on seeing Miss Baggs lying apparently cold in death at his feet.

"Darlin, are ye hurt?"

There was agony in the corporal's voice. He put an arm under her head to raise it. With the other he grasped her hands.

"To the divil's own keepin with the war anyway. What's it good for except to injure innocent women and children?"

In that nonresistance of unconsciousness he forgot that this woman had been engaged in what the world condemns openly, if not secretly, as illegitimate warfare. To him she was innocent, not that he reasoned upon her acts, but because a mysterious something—a breath from spirit land—had made her more to him than all the world beside. He laid his head down upon her breast to listen if the heart beat; he chafed her hands and arms; he took off his cap and fanned her. Still she lay limp in his arms without a sign of life.

"Darlin, darlin, come back to life. Come back, if it's only long enough to tell me ye forgive me for me cowardly chasin ye. Oi've killed ye. Oi know it. Oi wish some one would run a bayonet through me own rotten heart."

A slight murmur, something like a groan, escaped her.

"Praise God, there's life! If it'd only grow stronger! Ah, thank heaven, there's water!"

Laying her head down in the grass, he went to the side of the road where there was a runnel of clear water. Scooping some of it in his two hands, he threw it in her face.

She opened her eyes.

Corporal Ratigan never forgot the look with which his prisoner regarded him when she recognized who he was. There were two expressions following each other rapidly—the first, reproach; but when she noticed the pain with which it was received it melted into one of tenderness.

"Ah, Rats," she exclaimed faintly, "how could you do it?"

He put his great hands—brown from exposure—before his eyes to shut out the face which at every glance kindled some new emotion to rack him. Now that she had come to life another terror came to him to administer an added torture. He knew that mounted men were following; that they would soon appear over the crest just behind them; that his prisoner would be taken, tried and condemned.

"They're comin! They'll be here in a jiffy!" he cried wildly. "Tell me that ye forgive me. Tell me that ye don't hate me as I hate meself."

"For doing your duty, Rats?"

"Duty! Is it a man's duty to run down a woman like a hare? Don't talk to me of duty. If ye suffer for this, Oi'll desert and go back to Oireland, and God be praised if he'll send a storm to sink the ship and me in it. There's a drop in me canteen—a drop of whisky. Will ye take it, darlin—I mean—I don't know what I'm talkin about. Let me put it to yer lips. Take a swallow. It'll revive ye. No?" She appeared to be passing back to unconsciousness. "Take it for moi sake, sweetheart. Only take a good swallow, and ye'll be righted."

She opened her eyes. Evidently she had heard. There was an expression on her face indicating that his words had produced that effect upon her which might be expected in a woman who hears a strong man, unconsciously and unintentionally, declaring his love.

"Why do you wish me to live, Rats? Don't let me live. If you do, I'll die on the gibbet."

"Oh, darlin," he moaned, "don't be talkin that way. Oi'll die meself first. Oi'll raise a mutiny. Oi'll"—

He could not go on. His words mocked him. He well knew their futility. "Take a drop, sweetheart—only a drop for moi sake."

What a change from the day he had jokingly asked her to take an oath for "moi sake!"

"For your sake, Rats. Give it to me."

He put the neck of a battered tin canteen to her lips, and she drank a little of the liquid. It produced a beneficial change at once. A tinge of color came to her cheeks, and she breathed more easily.

A clattering of horses' hoofs, a clanking of sabers, mounted figures standing out against the morning sky on the crest behind them, and three cavalrymen are dashing on to where lies Miss Baggs and kneels the corporal.

"Promise me, Rats, that you will do nothing foolish," she asked pleadingly.

"O God! Oi'm going to draw me revolver on 'em."

"Promise."

"I can't."

"For moi sake, Rats."

The faintest trace of a smile, despite her desperate situation, passed over her face as she imitated the corporal's pronunciation. The quaint humor, mingled with so many singular traits prominent in her that could show itself at so critical a moment, touched a responsive Irish chord in his Irish heart and brought him to terms.

"For your sake, darlin, Oi'll do it," he said in a despairing voice.

There was scarcely time for him to speak the words—indeed they were whispered with his lips touching her ear—when the three cavalrymen rode up to where the two were.

"What's it all about, corporal?" asked one of them.

"I found this—this lady—lying here. Her buggy is broken. She is badly hurt." The corporal spoke the words haltingly, and drops of sweat stood out on his forehead.

"Who is she?"

"Well, that's to be found out some other time. One of ye'd better ride back for an ambulance and a surgeon."

"Never mind the surgeon," said Miss Baggs faintly.

"Well, bring the ambulance anyway," said Ratigan. "Ye can all go back if ye like. Oi'll stay with her. She's me own prisoner."

"There's no need of all going," said the man who had spoken. "I'll go myself."

He turned and rode away, while the others dismounted and threw the reins of their bridles over a fence rail. One of them caught Bobby Lee, who was cropping the grass near by, occasionally looking up as though suspicious that something had happened. The men loitered about, now and then approaching to take a look at the prisoner, but soon turning away again, quite willing to be free from the responsibility which Corporal Ratigan seemed disposed to take upon himself.

"Rats," said Miss Baggs, who was now rapidly recovering strength and coolness, "it will not be long before I shall be separated from you. Before then I wish to thank you for the kindness, the interest, even the tenderness, with which you have treated a fallen enemy. And I wish to ask your forgiveness for the deception I practiced on you once when you were deputed to see me through the lines."

"What was that compared with what Oi've done?" he moaned.

"Do you forigve me?"

"Oi do. But Oi've nothin to forgive."

"And, Rats, you have unconsciously let me know that you—you feel more kindly toward me than"—

"You've robbed me of me heart intirely."

"Well, I'm both glad and sorry. It is delightful to be loved, but sad to think that your very love must make you grieve. Our meetings have been few and strange—very strange," she added musingly. "Who are you, Rats? I know you are well born. I can see it in every word and motion."

"Oi'm second son of Sir Thomas Ratigan, Esq., of County Cavan, Oireland. At his death me older brother succeeded to the estate. So I came to America to shift for meself. A year ago Oi enlisted in the Union ranks, and here Oi am. Oi wish to God me brother was in his coffin and Oi in possession of the estates, that Oi could give them all to save your life."

"No, no, Rats. You are a soldier and an honorable man. Remember what I have told you. You will do your duty hereafter as you have done it heretofore. Your words in that respect are meaningless. Your sense of honor will always triumph over your sympathy when that sympathy is alloyed with dishonor. For this I have conceived for you an unbounded respect. Perhaps were I not so soon to be"—

"Don't speak it, for God's sake don't speak it."

"Well, Rats, we will try for the brief time we shall be together to fix our minds on a pleasant picture. Let us think of that day when the south will be independent, or at least when north and south will be at peace. This region, now trodden by soldiers wearing the blue and the gray, will be given up to those simple people who till the soil. Instead of the sound of shotted guns there will be the lowing of cattle. Instead of the singing of minie balls there will be the songs of birds. There will be peace, blessed peace. Oh, if I could only live to see it! Then perhaps I may take you by the hand, say to you—But, Rats, this can never be for us. It is only a fancy picture I've drawn to relieve that terrible suffering I see in your face. You've aged ten years in as many minutes. Don't look at me in that dreadful way. I can't bear it."

The two cavalrymen's backs were turned. They were strolling toward the woods. Ratigan put his arms about her, and both yielded to a long embrace. There were no more words spoken. Words would have added nothing to what both felt. There was more pain and more pleasure concentrated in the bosom of each than had been there in all the years they had lived.

CHAPTER XIII.

"TURNED OVER."

There was a rattling of wheels on the soft road, and looking up Ratigan saw the messenger returning, followed by an ambulance. Driving to Miss Baggs, who was still lying in the grass, the driver backed it up to her, while the messenger dismounted and opened the door. The cavalrymen stood ready to lift the prisoner into the vehicle. But Miss Baggs waved them all away except the corporal, and taking his hand rose to her feet and stood for a moment supported by him. The effort was too much for her. Her head fell on his shoulder, and for a moment she lost consciousness. Ratigan took her off her feet, and lifting her into the ambulance laid her on the cushions.

"Oi'll ride at the foot," he said to the others. "One of ye lead me horse."

When they came to the place where each had successively emerged from the camp through which Ratigan had followed her before daylight, they found the road lined with soldiers, whose curiosity brought them there to see the woman who had succeeded in breaking through a whole chain of guards. They had all heard of the exploit and crowded around the ambulance as it passed, but were kept away by the guards in attendance, who dropped back to the sides and rear. This prevented any further conversation between Ratigan and Miss Baggs, except an occasional whisper, but the corporal managed to keep her hand in his under a blanket, unobserved. At last the ambulance pulled up before the headquarters of the division whose camp they had entered, and Ratigan suddenly became conscious of the fact that he must turn his prisoner over to others, doubtless to be dealt with summarily, for he well knew the case would naturally receive prompt attention.

An officer with a captain's shoulder straps came out from headquarters and surveyed the ambulance. He was a dapper little fellow, fat and red faced.

"Who've you got there?" he asked of Ratigan.

"A lady, sir."

"The woman who ran the guards last night?"

"Oi captured her on the road below."

"H'm. The guard duty of this division is in a fine condition when a woman can run a whole chain of sentinels. Get her out of that."

"She's badly hurt, captain," said Ratigan, who had stepped down on to the ground and saluted.

"I can alight," said Miss Baggs feebly. And getting as best she could to the door of the ambulance Ratigan helped her out. She looked faint, but stood by the aid of the corporal's arm.

"Take her in to the general," said the little captain. "He wants to see her."

As the tent was an ordinary wall tent, there was no great room in it. Miss Baggs went inside, while the corporal stood directly outside, with his hand on the tent pole.

"I must have you searched," said the general to the prisoner. Then he added, somewhat hesitatingly, "It's rather awkward not having a woman in camp."

"I will relieve you of the necessity," said the prisoner, with dignity, and putting her hand into her pocket she drew forth a bundle of papers, which she handed to him.

"What are these?" asked the surprised commander.

"Copies of intercepted telegrams."

The general uttered an exclamation, and taking the papers ran them over with his eye.

He looked up at the woman, who, save for the pallor occasioned by her fall from the collapsed buggy, stood apparently unmoved. There was admiration in the eye of the man who gazed at her. He was astonished at the coolness with which she handed him documents that would warrant his hanging her to a tree without a moment's delay, and above all there was about her a divine consciousness of having done a duty, a look of triumph under defeat, that compelled his reverence as well as his admiration.

"Are you aware," he said, "that with these dispatches in your possession, and beyond our lines, you would hold this army at your mercy?"

"I am."

"And that captured with them on your person your life is forfeited?"

"Certainly."

There are people who cannot brook a steady stand in one who may be naturally expected to break down in their presence. The general was one of these. In proportion as he admired her firmness was his desire to force her to show some giving way. He did not analyze his feelings and attribute his desire to any such cause. He yielded to it without realizing that the cause existed.

"The natural method of procedure in this case," he said, looking at her sternly, "is for me to report your capture and the circumstances attending it to headquarters. Word comes back to try you by 'drumhead' court martial and hang you to tomorrow morning."

"Well?"

"Well, that is the end of the story."

There was silence for a few moments while they regarded each other.

"It is not the end of the story, general. The story of a life has no end. Death is but a transition. It pleases the Great Commander to assign me a fruitless task. It is not for me to ask why. I am but one of his soldiers, fighting with my brothers for my people."

She had conquered. There was something so forcible in her words, something so truly grand in her manner, that the man who would break her spirit desisted. He regarded her admiringly and was silent.

"All I ask, general," she said presently, seeing that he did not speak, "is that there be no greater delay than necessary. Now I have a strength which may be worn away by long waiting, with death staring me in the face."

Still the officer did not speak. He was thinking—thinking how he could get rid of so unpleasant a duty as the trial and execution of this splendid woman. He feared that should he report her capture to headquarters he would get the same reply as in the case he had cited.

"I will not harm you," he said presently. "Some one else must take the responsibility of this complication of death and a woman."

"It does not matter who does the work, so long as it must be done."

"Perhaps not to you. It matters a great deal to me. My hands are clean. I don't care to stain them."

While this conversation was going on Corporal Ratigan was listening and observing the speakers with a palpitating heart. There was something so cold cut in the general's tones that the corporal felt a repugnance at his prisoner being in his especial keeping. He preferred that she should be sent to some one else and was relieved when he announced his intention to shift the responsibility. Besides the corporal hoped that he would himself be intrusted with her keeping until she should arrive at some camp where the commander would be willing to receive her.

"Shall Oi take her to headquarters, general?" he asked.

"Ah, my man!" said the general, as though awakened from a reverie, "are you here? I had forgotten you."

"Oi can conduct her to headquarters if you desire it, general."

"I am not in the habit of receiving suggestions from my brigade or regimental commanders, much less a corporal."

Ratigan saw that he had made a mistake and said nothing. The general regarded him with his shrewd eyes. It was plain to him that the man was interested in his prisoner.

"Corporal, you may go to your camp."

"Yes, sir."

"Orderly," called the general to a man standing near, "take this woman to the ambulance."

As Miss Baggs passed out the eyes of the two were fixed again on each other. While the general did not use words he could not resist a last attempt with his presence, his masterful countenance, his piercing eyes, to overawe his prisoner. She met that gaze firmly, unflinchingly, till she was without the tent; then with a final glance of contempt she turned and walked toward the ambulance.

The general called her back.

"You do not seem well satisfied with my treatment of you," he said in a tone in which there was something of sarcasm. "We soldiers must do our duty."

"It is not your doing your duty, general, that fails to win my respect. It is that you have not the manliness to do it yourself, but must needs put it upon some one else."

Again the two pairs of eyes met and clashed. The victory was with the woman. The general lowered his to the ground.

"You may go," he said.

As soon as she was gone he went to a tent where there were writing materials and wrote a note, which he sealed and addressed. Giving it to the little captain, he directed him to send it, with the prisoner and the dispatches captured on her, to the officer whose name was on the envelope.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN UNWELCOME PRISONER.

It was 8 o'clock in the morning. Colonel Maynard pushed back the tent flap, intending to step outside and go to the mess tent for breakfast. The brightness of the morning seemed reflected in his countenance. His step was firm, his bearing full of youthful, manly vigor. He had been rapidly gaining the confidence of his officers and was coming to be admired and beloved by his men. All misgivings as to his fitness for his responsible position had melted away. Colonel Mark Maynard was the man most to be envied of those no older than himself in the Army of the Cumberland.

He had scarcely passed from his tent when, glancing down the road beside which his camp was located, his attention was arrested by an ambulance coming slowly along driven by a man in a soldier's blouse and smoking a short clay pipe. On either side rode a cavalryman. The colonel paused to watch the coming vehicle and its attendants. Had it not been guarded he would have supposed it to contain a sick soldier going to hospital. As it was, it must either hold an officer of high rank or a sick or wounded prisoner. Whatever it contained, there came to the man watching it an uncomfortable feeling that it was in some way a link between himself and misfortune. The bright, happy look of a moment before disappeared, to be replaced by a troubled expression, though he could not have given a reason for foreboding. When the ambulance stopped opposite his tent, he muttered with a knitted brow:

"What does this mean?"

One of the attendants dismounted, went to the door of the ambulance, opened it and handed out a woman, who descended to the ground with some difficulty, as though in a weakened condition. The two then came directly to where Colonel Maynard was standing.

The woman was attired in a striped calico dress. Her head and face were bare. The colonel knew at a glance that he had seen her before, but could not tell where. She walked slowly, for she seemed scarcely able to drag herself along, and he had time to study her features as she came on. The two stopped before him. The soldier saluted, and drawing an envelope from his belt handed it to Colonel Maynard. The colonel took it without looking at it. He was still studying the features of the woman.

"A communication from General ——, colonel," said the man who handed him the paper. As the soldier spoke Colonel Maynard recognized the woman he had met at Mrs. Fain's. His hand trembled as he grasped the envelope and tore it open.

HEADQUARTERS —— DIVISION,
ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND,
IN THE FIELD, Sept. —, 1862.

Colonel Mark Maynard, Commanding the —th Cavalry Brigade:

COLONEL—I send you a woman who this morning was caught tampering with the telegraph line, and who has evidently been taking off our dispatches. Being in transit and about to move on this morning, I take the liberty to send her to you under guard, with the suggestion that you do with her as seems best to you. I have use for the limited number of men present for duty on my escort, and this is my apology for troubling you. Yours is the nearest command to which I can send her. I am very respectfully your obedient servant,

——,
Brigadier General.

Colonel Maynard read the missive over twice, slowly, without looking up. He had not read a dozen words before he knew that he held in his possession one whose life was forfeited as his own life had been forfeited to the Confederates a year before. His keeping his eyes on the paper was to gain time, to avoid speaking when his utterance was choked with a strange emotion. His thoughts were far away. He stood on the bank of the Tennessee river below Chattanooga. It was in the gray of the morning. He saw a skiff tied to the shore. He jumped down to seize it and found himself among a group of Confederate soldiers.

Personating a member of General Bragg's staff, he commanded them to row him across the river. They started to obey. As they left the shore suddenly a boat swung around Moccasin point. It was full of armed men. He was taken back to Chattanooga, tried and condemned to be hanged for a spy.

All this passed before his mind's eye as he stood pretending to study the communication before him, not this bare statement of it, but each detail, each feeling of hope, fear, despair, as they rapidly succeeded each other from the moment of his capture till his escape and safe return to the Union lines.

Looking up at last with an expression of commiseration which surprised the prisoner, he said:

"Madam, will you please accept my heartfelt sympathies?"

Miss Baggs, who had already recognized Colonel Maynard, simply bowed her head in acknowledgment without speaking, but fixing her large dark eyes upon his. When placed in a similar position, Maynard had met his enemy's glance with affected coolness in a vain hope of deception. Not so the woman before him. The time for deception had passed with her. She was a Charlotte Corday, knowing that the guillotine awaited her, a martyr in whose eyes gleamed the divine light of a willing sacrifice to a cause she believed to be sacred.

The colonel spoke again:

"Madam," he said, "it is my duty to report your case to my commanding officer for transmission to the headquarters of this army. There is a little house across the road. If you are able to go there, you will be more comfortable while we are awaiting the reply."

"As you like, colonel."

"Perhaps it would be better to use the ambulance."

"I can walk. I would prefer it."

"Will you accept my assistance?"

She took his offered arm, and the two walked slowly toward a farmhouse a few hundred yards distant. As the colonel passed a sentry he directed him to have the officer of the guard summoned and sent to him. On reaching the house and mounting the few steps that led up to the door, they were received by a farmer's wife and ushered into a small sitting room. Bowing to the prisoner, Colonel Maynard stepped outside to instruct the guard. It was not essential that he should hasten, but he did not feel equal to an interview.

After seeing a sentinel posted on each side of the house Maynard turned to go to his tent. He was drawn by some unaccountable instinct to look once more at the abode of his prisoner. She was gazing out at him with a pair of eyes melancholy, unresisting, full of resignation.

What fiend had suddenly thrown this beautiful woman, this queen of martyrs, into his keeping, with death staring her in the face, and he perhaps to inflict the penalty? Why, if he must suffer this turning of the tables by fate, could not the victim have been a man, some coarse creature who would die like a brute? And why had it not come upon him before love had introduced him to that instinctive delicacy, that gentleness, those finer heart impulses of woman?

"O God!" he murmured, "suppose—suppose she were—Laura?"

To be continued.)

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U. & M. R. R. Time Table.

GOING EAST

66, Local Freight,	Lv	6 a. m.	
16, Passenger,	"	10:05 "	At 10:00 a. [illegible]
64, Fast Freight,	"	1:35 p. m. "	1:40 p. [illegible]

GOING NORTH

142, Mixed Train,	Lv	12:30 a. m.	At 12:35 p. [illegible]

GOING WEST

63, Fast Freight,	Lv	11:15 a. m.	At 10:35 a. [illegible]
141, Mixed Train,	"	12:05 p. m. "	11:55 a. [illegible]
15, Passenger,	"	3:40 p. m. "	3:30 p. [illegible]

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RED CLOUD, - NEBRASKA

CHURCHES.

CHRISTIAN Church—Services Sunday at 10:30 a m and 7:30 p m; Sunday school at 12 noon Y P S C E at 6:30 p m and Y P S C E Juniors at 4 p m.

CONGREGATIONAL Church—Services at 10:30 a m, and 7:30 p m; Sunday school at 11:30 a m, Y P S C E at 6:30 p m and Y P S C E Juniors at 4 p m.

METHODIST Church—Class Meeting at 10 a m. Services at 10:30 a m and 7:30 p m. Sunday-school at 11:30 a. m. Junior League at 4 p. m. Epworth League at 6:30 p. m. Prayer Meeting every Wednesday night. Parsonage first door north of the church.

EPISCOPAL Church—Services every two weeks, by appointment.

LUTHERAN Church—Every third Sunday morning at 10 o'clock.

CATHOLIC Church—Services by appointment.

BAPTIST Church—No regular services. Sunday school (regular) at noon. B Y P U at 6:30 p m.

CHAPEL—Sunday school at 3 p m every Sunday.

SOCIETIES.

A O U W—Each alternate Tuesday evening.

D OF H—Red Cloud Lodge No. —, A O U W, meets every alternate Tuesday evening in A O U W hall. All are invited to attend.

BEN Adhem Lodge No 186; I O O F every Monday night.

CALANTHE Lodge No 29, Knights of Pythias Thursday evening.

RED Cloud Lodge No 698, Modern Woodmen of America, alternate Wednesday evening

VALLEY Lodge No 5, Fraternal Order of Protectors, first and third Monday of each month.

CHARITY Lodge No 53 A F and A M each Friday evening on or before the full moon.

RED Cloud Chapter No 19, R A M alternate Thursday evening.

CYRENE Commandery No 14 alternate Thursday evening.

CHARITY Chapter Eastern Star No 47 meets first Friday evening after full moon.—Mrs. Brewer W. M.

GARFIELD Post No 30 G A R Monday evening on or before the full moon.

GARFIELD W R C No 14 meets alternate Saturday afternoon.

MARY SEERS McHENRY Tent No 11 Daughters of Veterans Monday evening.

H S KALEY Camp No 25, S of V Tuesday evening

SHERMAN Circle No 3, ladies of the G A R first and third Saturday evening.

RED CLOUD Council No 18 Loyal Mystic Legion of America first and third Friday evening.