



"And you are the sister of Cameron Fitz Hugh?" "I am. I am Caroline Fitz Hugh."

"How can my death be prevented?" "I am charged with your execution. I will take you to your lines myself this night."

What was that subtle influence, far stronger than battalions of infantry or batteries of artillery, which gave it to one not present, unconscious of his power, to hold Mark Maynard over a precipice and to cast him into a black gulf below?

The expression on Miss Fitz Hugh's face as she heard Maynard speak words which would save her from death and give her liberty underwent a change.

"No, colonel, we Fitz Hughs cannot accept sacrifice, and especially wrong from others. We give; we are not accustomed to receive."

"What then," he said at last, "can I do?" "Send the news of my condition, of my expected"—she shuddered at pronouncing the word—"execution to our lines. Knowing that I am condemned, they can bring that influence they may be able to save me."

"It will avail nothing." "Try it. Fate, luck, Providence works strangely at times. Let us push on and leave the rest to a higher power."

"In ——— cavalry division and on the Confederate right. I heard from him only a few days ago. He was then at Ringold."

"That is not far from here." "There may be time," she said hopefully.

"Some one must steal through the line. If not shot, he may accomplish something. In half an hour I shall be ———"

"One same." "This is fortunate. Come with me." "The two started together to a thicket wherein they would neither be observed nor heard."

"You would like to save her, would you not?" "God knows I would."

"Then go to the picket line and get through unobserved if possible. Go to Ringold and find a Confederate officer—Cameron Fitz Hugh, if he is there. Tell him that his sister is condemned to be shot at sunrise tomorrow morning."

"What is the time?" he asked of his conductors. "Twenty minutes to 11."

"Let's go faster. Colonel Fitz Hugh would be as anxious for me to get on as I am myself if he knew me errand."

"All right. Let's light out, Pete." And Ratigan felt the motion of a gallop in the horse he rode.

"You will need the countersign." Ratigan returned, and the colonel whispered it in his ear, "Carnifax Ferry."

CHAPTER XVII. RATIGAN'S MISSION. The extreme left of the Army of the Cumberland, from which Corporal Ratigan started to go through the lines, was held only by cavalry and mounted infantry, and these widely separated.

Passing over the Pea Vine ridge, he descended the other side sloping to a small stream called Pea Vine creek. It was essential that he slip through between the Union vedettes unseen, for if observed he would be taken for a deserter and either shot or sent in to the headquarters of his regiment.

He advanced cautiously to the trees beside the track and waited for the train. Presently the headlight of a locomotive shot out from around a curve.

"Who are you?" "The man who captured her," pointing to the house. "O'll never draw sabre again."

of an enemy. He walked on the track for a short distance, expecting a challenge with every step. He received one suddenly, just before entering a wood. A man on horseback aimed a carbine at him and gave the customary:

"Who comes there?" Ratigan at once threw up his hands, which his challenger could distinctly see, and cried out, "I want ye to take me to Colonel Fitz Hugh."

"What do you want with him?" "Do ye know him?" "He commands a regiment in our brigade."

Seeing that the corporal held his hands above his head, the man permitted him to draw near. Once here, Ratigan informed him of the nature of his mission and begged him for Colonel Fitz Hugh's sake to send him to Ringold at once.

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ing the ——— cavalry brigade." "Do you mean to tell me," said Fitz Hugh, with a singular, impressive slowness, "that my sister is at the mercy of Mark Maynard?"

"He is charged with her execution." Colonel Fitz Hugh shuddered. "That man is my Nemesis," he cried in a voice filled with a kind of despair.

"There is nothing that I can do," he said at last. "Threatened retaliation is the only resource, and that could not be effected under the circumstances without implicating Colonel Maynard."

"Then ye see no way open?" asked the corporal despondently. "It is impossible for me to act intelligently alone. If I could see Colonel Maynard, perhaps together we might hit upon a plan."

"There is not sufficient time." "There's five or six hours." Fitz Hugh stood pondering for a few moments without reply.

"Go tell Colonel Maynard that I will meet him as you suggest. Let the point of rendezvous be—let me see—where do you consider a feasible point? You have just come through."

"O'll name the bank of the creek at a point due west of this." "How long a time will be required before the meeting can take place? It is now a little after 11."

"It may be an hour; it may be longer. If ye will be there, colonel, at 12 o'clock, we'll meet ye as soon after as possible."

"You will find me there at 12." "It would be well, colonel, to concert a signal by which each should know the other."

"Suggest one." "O'll doubtless be with Colonel Maynard. O'll cry 'Oireland,' and ye can respond!"

"To the rescue." Colonel Fitz Hugh called to those waiting outside, who had brought in Corporal Ratigan and directed them to blindfold him and take him to the Federal lines, and, if possible, insure his getting through without injury.

"Who comes there?" cried the vedette, cocking his piece as Ratigan came in sight.

CHAPTER XVIII. A STRANGE MEETING. Ratigan was so exhausted as to be only able to give Maynard a few detached sentences, conveying some idea as to what he had accomplished.

There was little that it was essential should be told except that Colonel Fitz Hugh would meet him between the lines as soon as he could get there.

Every minute was precious. It would be midnight before they could meet, and then they would only have about six hours in which to take measures to secure a reprieve.

Mounting, they began to climb the Pea Vine ridge. Ratigan, who had been over the ground, led the way.

On reaching the bank of the creek they descended it, the corporal riding ahead and peering through the darkness to discover what they were looking for.

To be continued.) Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

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