

"And you are the sister of Cameron Fitz Hugh?"

"I am. I am Caroline Fitz Hugh." "You shall not die."

When Colonel Maynard spoke these words, there was a grandeur in his tone, his figure, the lines of his countenance, the light in his eye, strangely inconsistent with a resolution he had made the moment before they were uttered. He had on the instant reversed his decision made not ten minutes before to do his duty, in the ordinary acceptance of what that duty was. He had determined you not?" to save the woman before him, even if it were necessary to take upon himself far greater ignominy than the death to which she was sentenced. There was silence between them, during which Miss Fitz Hugh stood looking at him in admiration, mingled with inquiry. She knew that some secret charm was at work within, but she did not know what

"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 articlery, 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? Was it circumstances that had a year before led Fitz Hugh to accept the very part Maynard was now called upon to play? Was it love that had given Maynard the bride Fitz Hugh was to have possessed? Was it some invisible flend that had made Maynard a robber of that bride from the man to whom he twice owed his life and was now bringing on his punishment? These were indirect causes, but they cannot explain that inexpressible, intangible sense of honor which will lead a man, to speak paradoxically, to commit a crime and sacrifice himself at the same time for another.

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. For a moment after they were spoken there was a delighted look, but as she realized what they meant to the man who would save her it was transformed into an expression which can only be described as bordering on the confines of angel land. There was a holy look in her eyes, a radiance of purity from the soul expressed in every feature. There was the superhuman attribute of at the price of wrong.

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

look as if in refusing the sacrifice she had stabbed him.

"What then," he said at last, "can l

"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 what 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."

The colonel looked at his watch. "It is now half past 9. We are but a few miles from the Confederate lines. Your brother is"-

"In -- 's 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 hope fully.

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

"You?" "Yes, I! I will not trust this only thread on which your life hangs to any one else, though I confess," he added gloomily, "I have no confidence in it."

"No, colonel, I cannot accept this from you. You are the commander here and are all that stands between me and death. You must remain here and send a messenger."

"Who would I dare intrust with such a message?

"Send for the man who captured me, Corporal Ratigan. Let him bear the message.

The colonel looked at her a moment, as if to question why this man should be so trusted, but her eyes were lowered. He knew there was a secret which it did not become him to pry into.

"I will send him, if he can be found at once. If not, I will go myself. And if the mission fails"-

The words were not finished, for he well knew how precious time was, and turning from the room and the house strode rapidly toward his tent.

He had gone but a dozen paces before he heard some one call.

"Colonel!" He did not hear. The call was repeated.

"Colonel!" A man approached him, whom in the

darkness he did not recognize. "Is there no hope, colonel?" the man asked in a choked voice.

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

"Corporal Ratigan?"

"This is fortunate. Come with me." The two started together to a thicket wherein they would neither be observed

"Oi'm hangin round, ye see, colonel. Oi'm away from camp without leave. Oi hope they'll shoot me for a deserter." Colonel Maynard did not speak till they reached the thicket. Then, turning and facing Ratigan, he said ear-

"You would like to save her, would

'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. Say that Colonel Mark Maynard sends him this information, that he may use whatever influence he possesses—take any measures he may consider honorable-to save her. Tell him," the colonel lowered bis voice, "that I offered to attempt to do so, taking ruin upon myself, but she would not accept the sacrifice. Go; there is no time to lose. When the sun rises, it will be too late.'

"Oh, colonel," cried the man in agony, "there is so little time!" "Go! It is not yet 10 o'clock. We

have six hours." The corporal was moving away when the colonel stopped him.

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

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 There was no regular picket line sucn as usually exists between armies confronting each other where the different branches of the service are represented in one continuous line. Consequently the corporal had a far better chance to get through than under ordinary circumstances. 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 choosing death before life and liberty headquarters of his regiment. The vedettes were principally on the roads, and the corporal, believing that they would be looking for an enemy on routes over which cavalry could best advance, selected one least advantageous for a Maynard stood gazing at her with a horse to follow. Wherever he could find a thick clump of trees or low growth, a knoll, a ravine, indeed any thing difficult for a horse to pass, he would go over or through it. Now he would stop to listen for some sound such as a horse is liable to make, and now would steal on his hands and knees or crawl on his belly over some eminence where, if he should stand upright, his body would make a silhouette against the sky. On crossing a bit of level ground he suddenly heard a horse's 'splutter." He was near a clump of bushes in which he lost no time in concealing himself. A cavalryman rode by within 50 feet of him, walking his horse slowly, the butt of his carbine resting on his right leg, and in a position to be used readily. He was patrolling a beat. Ratigan waited till he had gone past, then darted onward to trees which, from their irregular line, he judged grew beside the creek. He was not disappointed and was soon standing in shallow water, resting for a few minutes under a low bank.

Once past the creek he felt that one half his danger was ended. He had doubtless got beyond the range of his own comrades, and now came a great danger of meeting the Confederate a slight eminence and made a survey of the surrounding country. All was silent, except that he could hear an occasional sound like a distant burst of laughter, or a shout from the direction of Ringold, in his front. Presently he heard the unmistakable rumble of a train coming from the south.

"It will pass right down there behind that clump of trees and go through the cut," said the corporal. "Oi wonder wouldn't it be a good plan to take advantage of its noise when it passes to slip through the outposts. They'll be thinkin of the train, and Oi can follow in its wake."

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. The corporal had forgotten that its light would reveal him to the engineer. He crouched down out of sight with a high beating heart, and none too soon, for had he staid where he was the light would have shone directly on him. He waited while the engine puffed slowly by. It was drawing a long train of mixed passenger, cattle and platform cars, every car crowded with troops.

"They're preparin to give us a brush in earnest. Like enough these are re-enforcements," muttered the corporal.

Ratigan determined to follow the railroad north to Ringold, which he judged to be only a mile distant. The train loaded with Confederate troops having just passed, the guards he might meet would probably not be very suspicious

of an enemy. He walked on the track for a short distance, expecting a chal-

lenge 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 thar?" 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 bri-

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. The vedette was convinced from Ratigan's earnestness that he bore a message of importance, and calling his comrades ordered one of them to dismount. Then, taking the precaution to blindfold the stranger, he mounted him, and placing a horseman on either side of him sent the three clattering toward Ringold. It was not a long distance to the town, but all distances, all periods of waiting, seemed long to the corporal. Was not the terrible event to take place at sunrise? And now it must be near midnight.

"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

Oi am meself 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. And now came a "Halt" from a guard and an answer, followed by "Advance and give the countersign." One of the men goes forward for the purpose. Then the party goes on again, but what they pass or where they are going Ratigan knows just come through." nothing about. He only knows that they are moving, and that they are not moving fast enough to suit him. Pres-

ing the -th 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.

'Tis he that sent me to ye." "He?"

"The same."

"Does he wish to save my sister?" "He does." "Why, then, does he not do so?"

"He can only save her by his own disgrace. Yer sister will not accept the sacrifice." "A true Fitz Hugh," said the brother

proudly.

"Then Miss Fitz Hugh suggested that he might send me to inform ye of the situation, that ye might hev opportunity to use any influence ye would consider wise and honorable to secure a reprieve. "

Fitz Hugh thought earnestly with his head bowed, his eyes fixed on a spot on the ground.

'There is nothing that I can do," he mid at last. "Threatened retaliation is the only recourse, and that could not be effected un ler the circumstances without implicating Colonel Maynard." "Then ye see no way open?" asked

the corporal despondently. "It is impossible for me to act intel ligently alone. If I could see Colonel Maynard, perhaps together we might hit upon a plan.

"Would ye meet him between the lines?" "There is not sufficient time."

"There's five or six hours." Fitz Hugh stood pondering for a few

moments without reply. Then, suddenly starting up, he said: "Go tell Colonel Maynard that I will

meet him as you suggest. Let the point of rendezvous be-let me see-where de guards, they cautiously approached the you consider a feasible point? You have "Oi would name the bank of the cree!

at a point due west of this." "How long a time will be required ently they stop, and the corporal can before the meeting can take place? It is hear one of the men dismount. There is now a little after 11."



TEARING UP THE FLOORING.

stroke of a clock evidently from a church spire. He counted, "One, two, three," and on to eleven.

"Dismount."

He lost no time in throwing himself from his horse and was led forward. The air became warmer. He must be in an inclosure. The bandage was taken

from his eyes. He was standing in a tent lighted by a candle fixed to the end of a stake driven into the ground. There was but one other person present, a Confederate officer. He was a tall, slender young man, with long black hair, a mustache and goatee, and an eye honest, respect inspiring, and with all the gentleness

of a woman's. "Are ye Colonel Fitz Hugh?" asked the corporal, making a salute as if in presence of an officer of his own side.

"I am." "Oi have a message from yer sister." Colonel Fitz Hugh turned ashy pale. No one could come to him from her without striking terror into him, for he knew the work in which she was engaged. For months he had lived in dread pickets. Leaving the creek, he ascended of her capture. If the messenger had been a citizen or a Confederate soldier, it might not speak so clearly of danger, but coming from a Yankee trooper quick reasoning told him that she had doubtless met with disaster.

"Indeed," was all his reply to the corporal's announcement.

'Oi'm sorry to inform ye, sir," said the corporal in a voice which he vainly endeavored to keep steady, "that Miss Fitz Hugh, passin under the name of Elizabeth Baggs''-

Fitz Hugh put his hand on Ratigan's arm and stopped him, while he gathered his faculties to bear what he knew was coming.

"Was pursued by a contemptible cur of a Yankee, who deserves to be hanged for chasin a woman"-

"Yes, yes. Go on." "Was captured and"-

"O God!"

"Condemned to be shot for a spy tomorrow mornin at sunrise.' Fitz Hugh sank back on a camp cot and covered his face with his hands. For a few moments the corporal re-

spected his grief by silence, but time was precious, and he soon continued. 'Thinkin ye might exercise some influence to save her, Oi've come to in-

form ye of the-distressin fact." The last two words were spoken in a broken voice.

"By whose authority?" Fitz Hugh rose and stood before the corporal. He had nerved himself for whatever was to follow.

"Colonel Mark Maynard, command-

"It may be an hour; it may be longer. If ye will be there, colonel, at 13 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."

"Oi'll doubtless be with Colonel Maynard. Oi'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. They were to report the result to him in any event.

Ratigan knew nothing but the gallop of the horse on which he sat, with a handkerchief about his eyes, until the party conducting him drew rein and he was directed to dismount. Then he was asked if he would be escorted to a Union vedette known to be on a road leading around the north end of the ridge of whether he would go alone.
"Oi'll go alone," he said. "If ye go

with me, they'll think it a midnight at-

Starting forward, the corporal trudged over a short distance between him and the vedette. As he drow near he began to sing a few lines from a play popular at the time.

Thim's the boys hat makes a noise, Is the R'yal artillerie.

"Who comes there?" cried the ve dette, cocking his piece as Ratigan came in sight. "Friend with the countersign, to be

sure! Who d'ye suppose?" "Advance, friend, and give the coun-

tersign," called the man. He was a good deal puzzled at hearing the Irish brogue coming from that direction, but it reassured him. He did not have much fear of an enemy unless it were a trap to get him at a disadvantage. Ratigan drew near and whispered, "Carnifax

"What are you doing out there?" queried the man.

"Lookin out for trains bringin in troops. One came in half an hour ago "You don't mean it! Guess they're

getting in re-enforcements." "I believe ye, me boy." Ratigan walked on toward the camp

till he got out of sight of the vedette. Then he ran till he dropped breathless in Colonel Maynard's tent.

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. Casting a glance at his watch, Maynard noticed that it was 20 minutes to 12. The distance to the point of rendezvous, as near as they could estimate it, was two miles. 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. They could only do so by communicating with general headquarters, some 15 miles away. In any event the case was desperate. However, Maynard had been used in his sconting days to sudden transitions and had himself escaped from prison on the very night before his intended execution. Calling his striker, he bade him saddle Madge, who, he knew, could carry him

over the ground at no laggard pace, and, ordering a mount for the corporal at the same time, the two waited impatiently till both minuals were led up before the Mounting, they began to climb the

Pea Vine ridge. Ratigan, who had beer over the ground, led the way. They reached the top of the ridge, and the corporal pointed out the position on the creek, due west of Ringold, where they were to meet Colonel Fitz Hugh. Descending the slope, they came upon a Union vedette and were challenged with the usual words, "Who comes there?" "The colonel commanding, with an

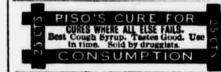
orderly, inspecting vedettes." They were advanced, gave the countersign and passed on. Taking a route between two roads and meeting no more place of rendezvous.

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. Presently the dark figure of a horseman emerged from a clump of trees on the opposite bank and rode forward toward the creek. Ratigan saw him, and, believing him to be some one in attendance upon Colonel Fitz Hugh, called: "Oireland."

"To the rescue," called the man in a low voice, and rode up to the margin of the creek.

To be continued.)

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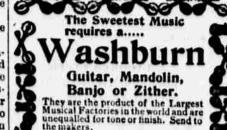


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