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CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SINGULAR CEREMONY. Laura Maynard, after a long period of solitude as to her husband—detained at home by a temporary illness of her child—had at last found it possible to go and seek him. She had arrived on the morning of the news of his appointment and at once sought General Thomas' headquarters. There she had been informed of the status, and a messenger was at once sent for her husband.

Leaving the tent where Maynard had first been plunged in despair only to be elevated to a condition of mind bordering on ecstasy, the two sought a hotel, where Laura could be made comfortable till the next day, and there passed the time in going over the period since they had parted and rejoicing at the outcome of the singular complications which fate had been pleased to bring down upon the husband.

But all meetings must have an end, and at last the husband, departing, rode to his tent. There he found a messenger waiting for him.

"Flag of truce" wants to see you on the picket line, sir.

Without dismounting, the newly created general rode in the direction of Mission ridge and met "the flag" at its base. There stood a mounted party of Confederates, one of them bearing a white flag, headed by an officer, a son of the south who spoke every word as though it were of momentous importance, never omitting the word "sir."

"Are you Colonel Maynard, sir?" "I am, or at least I was. I hardly know what I am just now. I should not be surprised to be informed that I was to command all the armies of the United States."

The officer looked puzzled. "I am the bearer, sir, of a message from Corporal Sir Hugh Ratigan. He is to be married at 7 o'clock this evening at General Bragg's headquarters on Mission ridge."

"The devil he is!" "That is his intention, sir. He desires your presence."

"Whom does he marry?" "Miss Caroline Fitz Hugh."

"I have been more surprised at other announcements, I confess. I don't wonder he invites me to his wedding, since I helped him to a wife."

"Shall I transmit your acceptance of the invitation, sir?" "On one condition."

"Please name it, sir."

"I fear it will be unacceptable to Colonel Fitz Hugh, who will doubtless be the host or one of the hosts. He will not likely yield in a matter of etiquette which I must insist on."

"Colonel Fitz Hugh cannot be present, sir. He is now in your rear with our cavalry completing the starvation of your army in Chattanooga by destroying your lines of supply."

"H'm. I was not aware of any hunger in our ranks. Indeed my request is, knowing that your own larder in the Confederacy is not exactly abundant; that the horn of plenty is not burying you like Hieronimus under the ashes of Vesuvius; that the blockade—"

"The blockade is not effective, sir," interrupted the officer stiffly.

"Has somewhat reduced your wine cellars, my condition is, I say, that I may be permitted to bring half a dozen cases of champagne for the wedding feast."

"I assure you, sir, that it is not necessary. We are getting cargoes of wine from Havre by a regular line of steamers. It is your own mess tables at Chattanooga that are doubtless bereft of beverages, owing to the fact that our General Wheeler is circus riding in Tennessee, leaving no road or railroad open to you."

"Do you consent that I shall bring the wine?"

"I do, sir, but shall claim for the host, a general officer related to the bride, the privilege of supplying an equal number of cases."

"Agreed. I will meet you here at 6 o'clock this evening, when you can conduct me and my party to the place where the ceremony is to take place. You may say, if you please, that I shall consider the invitation extended to my wife, whom I will bring with me."

"We shall feel highly honored, sir, at Mrs. Maynard's presence. Am I to infer, sir, that your wife has been able to reach you over the burned bridges and trestlework in your rear?"

"She has found no difficulty whatever in joining me."

"Maynard failed to add that Laura had only come a few miles to meet him."

"Good day, sir," said the officer, raising his hat. "I shall expect you at 6."

"Good day. I will be on time."

And each rode away in the direction of their respective camps.

Maynard's offer of the wine had come about in this wise: Jakey, during the previous week, had been investigating such empty houses as he could find in Chattanooga and had loaded himself down with knickknacks, such as china ornaments, pictures, crockery, cutlery, including even daguerreotypes. On one occasion he thought he had discovered a box of muskets. This he reported to Colonel Maynard, whom he persuaded to go with him to a cellar near by and make a search for concealed arms. The muskets were found, besides half a dozen cases of champagne, which had doubtless been there since the beginning of the war.

Upon leaving the picket line Maynard rode to the house where he had seen the wine and secured it for the evening, placing a guard over it. Then

he went to the hotel and had Laura get ready to attend a wedding.

There was consternation in the Confederate camp when the officer returned with the information that the Yankee had tried to bluff him by claiming the privilege of bringing champagne with him, and that he had claimed the right for the hosts to furnish an equal amount. The telegraph was set in motion at once, directing search to be made in all the neighboring towns for the required beverage. Dalton, Cleveland and other points were ransacked without success. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon, as despair was settling on the Confederates, a telegram was received that some champagne had been found in Atlanta. The authorities there were directed to send it by special locomotive, marking it: "Ammunition. Forward with dispatch."

At 7 o'clock Maynard, accompanied by Laura, and Jakey, who was always with him, besides a wagon containing the case of wine, were at the appointed place on the picket line, where they were met by the Confederate "flag." Transferring the wine to the backs of pack mules, all started up the side of Mission ridge to General Bragg's headquarters.

As they approached the crest a body of Confederate officers, a gay cavalcade in gray and gold lace, rode out to meet them. They were received by the relative of the bride—an uncle—referred to by the officer who brought the invitation. He was an elderly man, of a dignified and serious mien. The party were conducted to a large marquee set up for the wedding feast. There they alighted, and the wine was unloaded and carried inside.

A few minutes before 7 o'clock the guests were conducted to a knoll, on the summit of which had been erected a canopy of flowers, and where stood a group of Confederates of high rank. On the eastern horizon stood the full moon. Below to the east was the battlefield of Chickamauga. To the west, the Army of the Cumberland, besieged in Chattanooga, on half rations. As the guests approached, the groom, still in his uniform of a corporal, attended by his best man—a Confederate non-commissioned officer of good family, detail-

to accept as a contribution from the Army of Chattanooga.

At a signal from the officer addressed a negro removed a blanket covering a dozen boxes in a corner of the tent, which had come a hundred miles and had not been in position ten minutes.

"I see your six cases, general, and go you six cases better."

"Having no further resources at hand," said Maynard, bowing, "I retire from the game."

"Hannibal," said the Confederate, "you may advance the force in the first box to a position in line on the table."

"Yes, sah," said the person addressed. And seizing a saber standing in the corner he unsheathed it with a flourish and pried open a box of the wine. In a moment a dozen bottles were standing on the table like a platoon of soldiers.

"Now, Hannibal, you may fire the opening shot."

Hannibal broke the wires, and a "pop," a far more welcome sound than those that had been so recently and frequently heard by all present, announced that the feast was not only set, but begun.

"I must apologize for our glassware," said the master of ceremonies. "Our champagne glasses were all shattered by the concussion at Chickamauga."

And well he might. The array consisted of tin cups, wooden cups, glass cups and tumblers, all either cracked, broken or dented. And as a circle was formed to pledge the bride and groom one Confederate screened himself behind his comrades to avoid being seen drinking from a gourd. When the contents of 18 cases—a regiment of "dead soldiers"—lay on the table, the guests prepared to depart. The last words had been spoken by General and Mrs. Maynard and by Sir Hugh and Lady Ratigan. Jakey, who had thus far wandered about unobserved, though not unobserving, stepped up to the bride and groom. Though he had not tasted the wine, his eyes glistened with intoxication at the union of his two friends, whose attachment he had noticed from the first.

"Miss Baggs, air you uns'n Sir Ratigan ter ride round Tennessee some more in the chicken coop?"

There was a burst of laughter from



JAKHEY STEPPED UP TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM.

en for the occasion—was seen moving from the north toward the knoll. At the same moment the bride, attired in a dress made of a coarse white stuff, manufactured in the Confederacy, and attended by several bridesmaids, who had come from a distance to officiate, approached from the south. The two met on the knoll under the canopy. An officer of high rank, who was also a bishop in the church, stepped forward, and Corporal Sir Hugh Ratigan and Caroline Fitz Hugh were made one. The only lamp to light the nuptials was the round moon in the east. The only canopy, save that composed of flowers, was the broad heavens above, in which the stars had only just appeared for the night. The only wedding bells were occasional booms from guns on Lookout mountain.

The ceremony over, the bride and groom repaired to the marquee, lighted with candles, where they took position to receive the congratulations of the company. All gave way to Colonel and Mrs. Maynard, who offered theirs first.

"We must give you up, I suppose," said Laura to the bride, "just as we would like to know you better. You go abroad, I suppose."

"No, I remain here."

"But Sir Hugh will go?"

"Yes, as soon as he can get his discharge. He goes to Virginia from here, where he will pass through the lines to Washington and will put his case in the hands of the British minister. He anticipates no trouble in getting a discharge from the Federal army and hopes to sail within a month for Ireland."

"And you?" asked Laura, in some surprise that the bride could bear to part so soon with her husband.

"I remain with my people till the last gun has been fired. We have argued that question, and such is my decision."

"Not decisions," observed the groom, "are a thing of the past."

Leaving the newly married pair, Colonel Maynard approached the master of ceremonies, the bride's uncle.

"General," he said, "I esteem it a privilege that you have waived your right to furnish all the viands for the wedding feast and have permitted me to contribute. There," pointing to the boxes of wine he had brought, "are six cases of champagne, which I beg you

the party, and Lady Ratigan, with a blush, informed Jakey that the chicken coop was broken in pieces.

"I didn't know nuthin 'bout that. Reckon Sir Rats'd find it handy in Ireland. It's kind o' funny you uns startin' out way up by th' mountings 'n fetchin' up down hyar, nigh enter th' Georgy line." And Jakey surprised the company by giving the only "ha, ha" that had to this moment ever been heard to issue from his serious lips.

As the guests descended the side of the mountain a cheer was heard in the direction of Chattanooga. They stopped and listened. A man rode out from the Union picket line to meet them.

"What's that cheering?" asked General Maynard.

"Ole Pap's in command of the Army of the Cumberland."

THE END.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria.

When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.

When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria.

When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

MESSAGE FROM LOST WARSHIP

No Room for Doubt Exists that the Reina Regente Sunk.

Madrid, April 10.—Further evidence if any were needed, of the loss of the Spanish cruiser Reina Regente was found yesterday. A bottle that had been washed ashore was picked up and in it was found a piece of paper on which was written in pencil a message signed by the captain of the cruiser.

The message, which was dated March 10, 9 o'clock a. m., twelve miles distant from Bajo Aertanos, states that the position of the vessel was then hopeless.

At a cabinet meeting it was decided to officially announce the loss of the Reina Regente. The ministers also decided that the government shall assist the families of the crew.

Admiral Meade's Squadron. Washington, April 10.—Admiral Meade's squadron has sailed from Kingston, Jamaica, for Port-au-Prince, Hayti. The Cincinnati has gone to Port Antonio.

TO IMPEACH GOV. CLARKE.

Such Steps to Be Undertaken in Arkansas Legislature.

Little Rock, Ark., April 10.—Lively times are expected in the house of representatives. There was considerable talk of impeachment proceedings being brought against Gov. Clarke and it is understood that a resolution for that purpose will be introduced in the house by Mr. Monroe of Pulaski county.

It is known that bitter feeling exists between Mr. Monroe and the governor, growing out of an incident that occurred in the executive office some time ago, when the governor ejected the lawmaker. At least three other representatives are said to be loaded with speeches in which Gov. Clarke will be discussed and excitement is looked for. It is not believed, however, that an impeachment resolution will have a great number of supporters.

EXTENSION OF CIVIL SERVICE.

Chiefs of Divisions May Yet Be Brought Under the Law.

Washington, April 10.—The civil service commission recently submitted to the President further correspondence and data setting forth the benefits to be derived by placing under the civil service regulations the offices of chiefs of divisions in the various departments. It is understood the President has not yet had time to act upon these matters, but that he will during the summer make the extensions. The commission will regard this as a most important step in the direction of reducing the number of places now subject to political favor and will demonstrate its contention that such offices can be as well administered from an absolutely non-partisan basis as other offices now in the classified service.

Heavy Loss to the Treasury.

Washington, April 10.—Treasury officials are greatly dispirited over the supreme court's decision in the income tax case, and while admitting that they have no reliable data upon which to form an accurate estimate, they express the belief that the net result of the decision will be a loss of at least 50 per cent in the receipts from incomes.

Cholera Among Japanese Troops.

Kobe, April 10.—It is reported cholera has broken out among the Japanese troops at the Pescadore Islands. It is added 400 cases of cholera have occurred, and of this number 100 persons have died.

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