

Chickamauga.

By Captain F. A. MITCHEL.

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(Continued from last week.)

CHAPTER XXVIII. A SINGULAR CEREMONY.

Laura Maynard, after a long period of solicitude 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 Hercules 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?"

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 3 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 noncommissioned officer of good family, detailed 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 their 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."

"Moi 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 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."

gan. 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 Rats got ter ride roun Tennessee some more in the chicken coop?"



Jakey stepped up to the bride and groom.

There was a burst of laughter from 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 start in on 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.

Love Letters.

There ought to be a law making it a capital crime to keep any letter more than six months. More than half the trouble in this world—the sort of trouble, I mean, that breaks people's hearts and is occasionally aired in the divorce courts—is caused by letters foolishly preserved. Of course sensible people never write letters that all the world might not read. But all the sensible people are dead, for I venture to say there is not one of us who has not at some period of his life poured forth his soul in a letter he'd give his ears never to have written. If you are a man, it doesn't so much matter, for even if your letters to your old sweetheart do fall into the hands of her present husband it isn't at all likely he'll read them. Men haven't enough curiosity in the matter. Honorable scruples? Not a bit of it—simply lack of curiosity. But if you are a woman doesn't it make you write in spirit to think of those letters you wrote Jack or Will or George when you were sure he was the only man in the world? Of course the girl he married has read them—trust a woman far that—and she has made fun of your soul's outpourings, and—well, it's enough to turn one's hair white to think of it. Love letters ought to be written in ink that would fade in a fortnight, but so long as they are not people who keep them ought to be put into solitary confinement for all the rest of their lives.—Washington Post.

Chesterfield and the Vails System.

It will be remembered that in the days of the great Lord Chesterfield vails in London had reached such a pitch that it cost a man of position 5 or 10 guineas merely to dine out. As he left the house he had to run the gantlet of the butler and underbutlers and half a dozen footmen. One handed him his cane, one his hat, another his gloves, a fourth his coat, and so on, and so on, each expecting a crown in acknowledgment of his services. Lord Chesterfield saw that social intercourse was being ruined, called a meeting of the chief people in the world of fashion and got them to agree to give nothing to the servants when they dined out. It is true he was nearly lynched by a mob of irate footmen, but he carried his point.

It is said that at the present moment there is a tendency to revive the odious custom thus put down by Lord Chesterfield, and that the masher has begun to tip the men who put him into his great coat after dinner. If that is so, a clear case exists for a common agreement not to allow the infection to spread. Dining out would become a more intolerable burden than it is already if it also were complicated by the question, "What is the least I can give without looking mean?"—National Review.

Errors of Youth.

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The Stork's Devotion.

The stork has given numerous proofs of her maternal affections. She prepares her nest with care, lines it with down, deposits her eggs, hatches them tenderly and never for a moment leaves her cherished progeniture. When the little ones emerge from their shells, other labors begin. The father undertakes to provide their food. The mother takes charge of their education. First they have to be taught to fly, which is no trifling affair. When in attempting to walk on their own children fall, there is no great harm, but the little storks have to try their wings by leaving their nests and venturing into space. Therefore how timid are the young ones and how anxious their mother! And yet the first lesson passes off without accident, and soon you will see the young generation gayly fluttering around their airy home.

But these motherly instincts are common traits. The stork carries her devotion much further. She loves her children enough to give up her life for them, of which here is a memorable example: At Delft a house is on fire. The flames have reached the roof. A young brood of storks have just come to light. They are still nude and unable to fly. The mother understands the peril. She moves about, flaps her wings and makes a desperate chatter to attract assistance, and when at last her nest catches fire she resolutely settles down into it and perishes with her children. It is only just that in return for such devotion the young ones should love their parents. Therefore, when old age has come, when the old storks, crippled with rheumatism, can no longer venture far out in search of food, the children provide it for him.—French of Maurice Englehart.

The Mission of the Newspaper.

The clergymen of the period have had much to say, first and last, about the mission of the public newspaper. None, however, has better set forth its work than the reverend gentleman who was the orator at the Attleboro celebration. Said Mr. Wales, with perfect truth:

"It is the mission of the newspaper to publish news. Now, it is a fact that, from the man who waters his milk to the cold blooded murderers, all degrees of criminal mankind want news suppressed. Liars, thieves, scandal mongers, deceivers, burglars, fighters, adulterers, gamblers, drunkards and gentlemen rascals all cry out against the news publishers. Their business is disturbed by the enterprise of newspapers. But no one who is open and honest and free from any taint of transgression wants news suppressed."

It would be a blessed thing for more than one congregation if those clerics who are accustomed to carp at modern journalism, in season and out of season, would put themselves in possession of Mr. Wales' remarks on the province of the newspaper and read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them.—Boston Globe.

The Air We Breathe.

A new and novel instrument is the konescope, or dust testing apparatus. It is not a complicated scientific machine, being solely intended for estimating in an easy and simple manner the amount of pollution and number of dust particles in the atmosphere. The action of the instrument is based on certain color phenomena associated with what is called "cloudy condensation of air," and which can be produced by steam jets, high or low temperature of the air, the increased number of dust nuclei, etc. In working the konescope the air is drawn into the apparatus by means of a common air pump and quickly passed to the "test tubes," which are fitted with glass at both ends. When the tube thus charged is held toward the light, various colors, from pure white to nearly black blue, according to the purity or impurity of the sample under test, are indicated. The dust particles also form an important factor in these tests, the variation in their number causing the mirror to throw all the colors of the rainbow.—St. Louis Republic.

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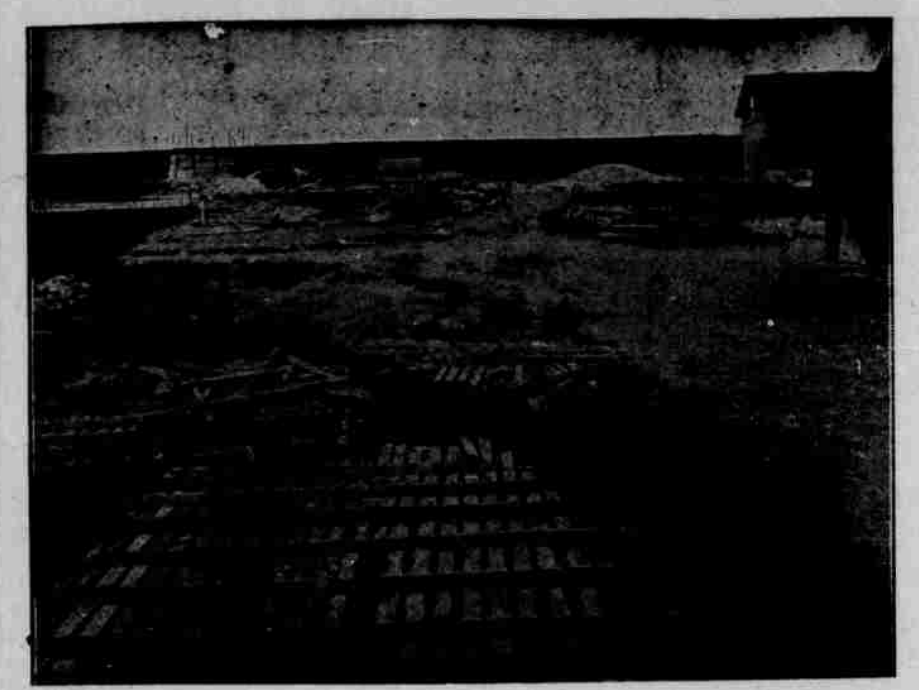
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