

MY LADY OF THE NORTH

The Love Story of a Gray Jacket

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens in a Confederate tent at a critical stage of the Civil War. Gen. Lee imparts to Capt. Wayne a long and important message to Longstreet. Accompanied by Sgt. Craig, an old army scout, Wayne starts on his mission. They get within the lines of the enemy and in the darkness Wayne is taken for a Federal officer and a young lady on horseback is given in his charge. They are led by a man claiming to be Red Lowrie, but who proves to be Maj. Brennan, a Federal officer whom the Union girl recognizes. He orders the arrest of Wayne as a spy and he is brought before Sheridan, who threatens him with death unless he reveals the secret message. Wayne believes Edith Brennan to be the wife of Maj. Brennan. He is rescued by Jed Bungay, who starts to reach Gen. Lee, while Wayne in disguise penetrates to the ball-room, beneath which he had been imprisoned. He is introduced to a Miss Minor and barely escapes being unmasked. Edith Brennan recognizing Wayne, says she will save him. Securing a pass through the lines they are confronted by Brennan, who is knocked senseless. Then, hiding Edith away, Wayne makes a dash for liberty. He encounters Bungay; they reach the Lee camp and are sent with reinforcements to join Early. In the battle of Shenandoah the regiment is overwhelmed and Wayne, while in the hospital, is visited by Edith Brennan. Wayne and Bungay are sent on a scouting detail, and arriving at the Mine Run place, Wayne meets Miss Minor and Mrs. Bungay, and later Edith appears. Wayne's detachment is besieged by guerrillas. Brennan and his men arrive and aid in repelling the invaders.

CHAPTER XXXI.—Continued.

"A mere waste of powder, I fear," was my reply, given thoughtlessly. "When the rush finally comes we are likely to be without sufficient ammunition to repel it. I hardly expect those fellows out there will ever leave without a determined effort to carry the house by storm. I have no doubt they are simply drawing all this fire in the hope that our ammunition will thus be uselessly expended. It is an old army trick, and one I am surprised to see so experienced an officer as Major Brennan yield to. In my judgment they will make an effort to rush us as soon as there is sufficient light."

"But why not warn him?"

"Major Brennan would scarcely welcome any interference on my part."

"But surely, as a soldier, he must value the advice of another soldier?"

"Possibly you forget," I explained, striving to speak as lightly of it as might be, "that there is a lack of friendship between Major Brennan and myself."

"Still?" she asked. "Truly I thought that might all be over. Even if it survived until now, this noble act of yours in coming to my defense should have earned you his gratitude. He has never once mentioned your name to me since that night."

"Not even when I came here with my troop, I believe?"

"No; yet I did not connect that fact with the other. I supposed it a mere oversight, or that he believed the mention of your name would not greatly interest me. Surely, Captain Wayne, you are not keeping open this unhappy wound?"

"On my word, no; but I regret to confess it is very far from being closed."

"He—Major Brennan does not know, then, that you are here now with me?" She evidently hesitated to ask this question.

"Certainly not," in surprise at her apparent innocence. "You cannot have supposed I had been sent here by him to talk with you?"

"I did not know, I do not think I realized," she stammered, vainly seeking for words with which to make clear her bewilderment. "I imagined you might have come at his suggestion to see that we were amply protected. This is all so very strange. He does not even know you are here with us?"

"No," I admitted reluctantly. "Perhaps I have no excuse even for being here at all. My duty as a soldier is certainly elsewhere, but I could not rest content until I knew you were in a position of safety. Believe me, Mrs. Brennan, I have intended no indiscretion, but I was informed by a soldier that you were being held here under fire."

Her hand touched mine impulsively, and it was warm and throbbing.

"I can merely thank you with all my heart, Captain Wayne, and assure you I both understand and appreciate your purpose. But truly I do not wish any trouble to occur again—you will go back to your post, will you not? You can serve me best in that way, and retain the gratitude and admiration I have ever felt for you."

"At once, Mrs. Brennan," I returned earnestly. "I realize I have done wrong in ever coming here as I have. It is my first act of disobedience to orders in all my military life. But tell me first that I have forfeited neither your confidence nor your friendship?"

She paused a moment, then added quickly, as though in sudden rush of feeling: "No friend stands higher in my esteem than you—now please go, Captain Wayne."

As I crept back through the darkness, passing beneath the piano into the front room, which was filled with the choking fumes of powder, my

mind was a chaos of emotions impossible to analyze. The very depth of love which drew me to her operated now in restraint. God alone knows the struggle in the darkness as I continued to move slowly away from her and toward the door. So deep was my agitation, so intense my thought, that I scarcely realized I was creeping along barely beneath the dead line of those bullets which constantly swept the apartment. Their crashing into the wall was almost meaningless, and I barely noted either the dense smoke or the fitful flashes of flame as the little garrison returned shot for shot. It was Brennan's voice—how hateful it sounded then—which recalled my attention.

"Mapes," he said, with the sharp tone of wearied command, "take a crack at that fellow over yonder by the big tree; he must be in range. You men, I verily believe, shut your eyes when you shoot, for there hasn't a man dropped out there in the last half hour."

I had reached the door by this time, but paused now, determined to venture one word of expostulation at his recklessness.

"Major Brennan," I said, speaking sufficiently loud to be audible above the uproar, "do you not think you will attempt to charge the house?"

"Not while we keep up this fire," he returned coldly, evidently recognizing my voice.

"I grant that, at least while darkness lasts. But you have just complained that your men were doing but small execution, and is there not danger of exhausting our stock of ammunition by such a useless fusillade?"

"It will last until our fellows get here—that is, if your man was ever really sent for aid, as you say."

There was a thinly veiled sneer in the words as he spoke them, but I curbed my temper.

"Well, in my judgment, sir—and I tell it you because I deem it a duty—I retorted plainly, "you are making a grave mistake which you may realize when it becomes too late to rectify it. Possibly I have no right to criticize one who is technically in command, yet I am serving as a volunteer, and the conditions are peculiar. I not only remember the scene witnessed by me in the lines yonder, but also recall the fact that we are here to fulfill a sacred duty—the defense of helpless women from outrage. A fatal mistake upon our part would be horrible."

"Very well, sir"—and his tone was rough and overbearing—"then kindly recall your soldierly instincts to another little matter. I chance to command here by authority of rank, and hold myself responsible for the proper defense of this portion of the house. I believe you have already been assigned your duties; if you will attend to them I shall be greatly obliged, and whenever I may desire your valuable advice I shall take pleasure in sending for you."

I turned away in silence and strode back to my post, white with anger. The dining-room remained as I had left it, and when I lay down in my old position and peered out through the broken blind I could mark no change in the appearance of our besiegers.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Hand to Hand.

The faint gray light of early dawn rested upon the outside world, and through the fleeting shadows of the mist I was able to distinguish much which before had been shrouded by the black curtain. In front of the window where I rested, the grass-covered lawn sloped gradually downward until it terminated at a low picket fence, thickly covered with vines. A great variety of shrubs, which during the night had doubtless afforded shelter for sharpshooters, dotted this grass plot, while beyond the fence boundary stood a double row of large trees. To the far left of our position the burnt stable yet smoldered dully, occasionally sending up a shower of sparks as a draught of air fanned the embers, but there were few signs of life visible. For the moment I even hoped our enemies might have grown discouraged and withdrawn.

"What has become of the guerrillas?" I asked in wonderment, turning as I spoke to face the Federal corporal who lay on the other side of me. "Is it possible they have given up?"

"I think not, captain," he replied respectfully, saluting as he would one of his own officers. "They were there just before the light came, and I saw a dozen or more stealing along behind the fence not five minutes ago. See, there is a squad of them now huddled together back of where the stable stood."

"Screw your eye close to the corner of the pane," I ordered hurriedly, "and see what you make out toward the front of the house."

"There's men out there sure, plenty of 'em," he reported slowly. "It looks to me mighty like the end of a line of battle, right there by that big magnolia tree. Anyhow, there must be all of twenty fellows lying close together between there and where the corner of the house shuts off my view, I don't

see none this side anywhere, unless it's a shooter or two hiding along the fence where the vines are thick."

"That's it, my lad," I exclaimed, heartily, getting upon my feet as I spoke. "We can stand up now, there's no danger here, but there will be music for all of us presently. Those fellows are getting ready to charge us front and rear."

There were five in the room. I could see them only indistinctly, as the morning light was not yet sufficiently strong to penetrate clearly to where we were, but I was able to note those present—the corporal and his wounded companion, with Hollis and Call of my troop.

"Let the wounded man remain and guard those windows," I commanded. "He would prove of small value in a hand-to-hand struggle, but can probably do some shooting. The rest come with me."

I led them forth into the wide hallway, which extended the full length of the house, with a broad flight of stairs just forward of the center, gradually curving and leading to the second story. The suspended light was yet burning as we came out, but flickered wildly as if in a strong draught of air, and I noticed that the constant rain of bullets during the night had badly splintered an upper panel of the door. Halfway down the broad hallway, and partially obscured by the turn of the stairs, a door stood slightly ajar upon the right hand. Conjecturing this might be where the



"I Believe You Have Already Been Assigned Your Duties."

defenders of the eastern exposure were lying, I peered within. The blinds were tightly drawn and I was able to perceive little of its interior, excepting that the walls were lined with books.

"Ebers," I called, thinking he must be there, "are you in charge here?"

"I vos, captain," came the instant reply, and he at once emerged from the darkness.

"Have the enemy kept you busy?"

"Der vos some shooting, and Hadley he got hurt bad, but der fellers is all gone."

"Bring your men fit for duty out here in the hall, and have them join my party. How many have you?"

"Der is four, captain."

He drew back, and as he disappeared some one came hastily toward us along the hallway from the rear.

"What is it, Caton?" I asked anxiously, as I recognized him.

"They are forming to rush me, I think," he answered. "I need a few more men if I can get them."

"They are preparing to assault front and rear at the same time," I answered. "They are massing now, and in my judgment Brennan will have to face the brunt of it. The front of this house is greatly exposed, and will prove extremely difficult to defend if they come against it with any force. How many men do you absolutely require to hold your position? Remember, the women are all in the front part of the house, and we must protect them at all hazards; come with me. There are times when a higher law than that of military despotism should control our actions. I am going there, orders or no orders. Ebers can command your detachment and accomplish all the service you possibly could. Your rightful place is between these ruffians and the woman you love. How many additional men will

be required to make the back of the house secure?"

"I feel like a new man, Wayne," he said thankfully, "and I know you are right. Four more would be sufficient, besides the one in command."

"Good! Ebers," I said, as my portly sergeant again emerged from out the darkness, "take your four men back to the kitchen and assume command. The guerrillas are preparing to make a rush there, and you must drive them back by a rapid fire. Hurry along now."

The little group had barely vanished beyond the glow of the light when from without our ears were suddenly assailed by a wild, exulting yell that bespoke the charge.

"There they are!" I cried. "Now, lads, come with me!"

The dull, gray, chilling dawn revealed a room in utmost disorder, the windows shattered, the blinds cut and splintered, the walls scarred with bullets and disfigured with stains of blood, the furniture overturned and broken. A dead soldier in gray uniform lay in the center of the floor, his life-blood a dark stain upon the rich carpet; a man with coat off, and blue shirt ripped wide open, was leaning against the further wall vainly endeavoring to staunch a wound in his chest. Brennan was upon one knee near the central window, a smoking gun in his hand, a red welt showing ghastly across his cheek. All this I saw in a single glance, and then, with the leap of a panther I was beside him, gazing out into the morning mist, and firing as fast as I could handle my gun.

Through the shifting smoke clouds we could see them advancing on a run—an ugly, motley line, part blue, part gray, part everything—yelling as they swept forward like a pack of infuriated wolves, their fierce faces scowling savagely behind the rifles. It was half war, half riot—the reckless onslaught of outcasts bent on plunder, inspired by lust, yet guided by rude discipline.

I knew little of detail; faces were blurred, unrecognizable; all I seemed to note clearly was that solid, brutal, heartless, blasphemous line of desper-

Whether I fought alone I knew not, cared not. Then some one pressed next to me, facing as I did, wielding a sword like a madman. We had our backs against the piano, our shoulders touched; before us that mob awayed, checked for the moment, held fast by sudden overpowering dread. I glanced aside. My companion was Brennan, hatless, his deep-set eyes aflame, his coat torn off, his shirt ripped open to the waist, his bare breast red with blood.

"No shootin', damn ye!" shouted a voice, hoarsely. "No shootin'; I want that Reb alive!"

Through the swirling smoke I recognized the malicious face of Red Lowrie as he pushed his way to the front. To me it was like a personal challenge to combat.

"Rush them!" I muttered into Brennan's ear. "Hurl them back a bit, and dodge under into the next room."

I never waited to ascertain if he heard me. With one fierce spring I struck their stunned line, and my iron bar swept a clear space as it crashed remorselessly into them. The next instant Lowrie and I were seemingly alone and facing each other. A wild cat enraged by pain looks as he did when he leaped to meet me. Hate, deadly, relentless, glared in his eyes, and with a yell of exultation he swung up his long rifle and struck savagely at my head with the stock. I caught it partially on my barrel, breaking its full force, and even as it descended upon my shoulder, jabbed the muzzle hard into his leering face. With a snarl of pain he dropped his gun and grappled with me, but as his fingers closed about my throat, something swirled down through the maze, and the maddened brute staggered back, his arms uplifted, his red beard cloven in twain.

"Now for it, Wayne!" shouted Brennan. "Back with you!"

With a dive I went under the piano. I heard the sliding doors shut behind us, and almost with the sound was again upon my feet.

"To the stairs!" I panted. "Brennan, take the women to the stairs; those fellows are not in the hallway yet, and we can hold them there a while."

In our terrible need for haste, and amid the thick, swirling smoke filling that inner room almost to suffocation, I grasped the woman chancing to be nearest me, without knowing at that moment who she was. Already the rifle-butts were splintering the light wood behind us into staves, and I hastily dragged my dazed companion forward. The others were in advance, and we stepped our way like blind persons out into the hall. By rare good fortune it was yet unoccupied, and as we took the few hurried steps toward the foot of the stairs I found my arm encircling Celia Minor. The depth of despair within her dark eyes and the speechless anguish of her white face, swept for an instant the fierce rage of battle from my brain.

At that moment the mob, discovering our direction of escape, jammed both doorways and surged forth howling into the hall.

"Up!" I cried, forcing her forward. "Up with you, quick!"

I paused a scant second to pluck a saber from beside a dead soldier on the floor, and then with a spring up the intervening steps, faced about at Brennan's side on the first landing.

"We ought to leave our mark on those incarnate devils here," he said grimly, wiping his red blade on the carpet.

"Unless they reach the second story from without, and take us in the rear," I answered, "we ought to hold back the whole cowardly crew, so long as they refuse to fire."

It was a scene to abide long with a man—a horrible nightmare, never to be forgotten. Above us, protected somewhat by the abrupt curve of the wide staircase, crouched the women. Two were sobbing, their heads buried in their hands, but Maria and Mrs. Brennan sat white of face and dry-eyed. I caught one quick glance at the fair face I loved—my sweet lady of the North—thinking, indeed, it might prove the last on earth, and knew her eyes were upon me. Then, stronger of heart than ever for the coming struggle, I fronted that scene below.

Through the rising haze of smoke I looked down into angry faces, unkempt beards, and blarneyed weapons. The baffled rascals poured out upon us from both doors, crowding into the narrow space, cursing, threatening, thirsting for revenge. Yet they were seemingly leaderless, and the boldest among them paused at the foot of the stairs. They had already felt our arms, had tested our steel, and knew well that grim death awaited their advance.

But they could not pause there long—the ever increasing rush of those behind pressed the earlier arrivals steadily forward. Grim necessity furnished a courage naturally lacking, and suddenly, giving vent to a fierce shout, they were hurled upward, seeking to crush us at whatever sacrifice, by sheer force of numbers. We met them with the point, in the good old Roman way, thrusting home remorselessly, fighting with silent contempt for them which must have been maddening. I even heard Brennan laugh, as he pierced a huge ruffian through the shoulder and hurled him backward; but at that moment I saw Craig knock aside a levelled gun and press his way to the front of the seething mass to assume control. His face was inflamed, his eyes bloodshot; drink had changed him into a very demon.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The average married man has about as much to do with managing his home as a mouse has with managing the family cat.

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Editor—Tell him he'd better treat them with respect.

Spendthrift.
Uncle Ezra—Do you think the money young Eph Hoskins made down in New York will last him long?
Uncle Eben—You bet it won't! He's going at an awful pace. I was down in the general store last night, and young Eph was writing \$100 checks and lighting his cigars with them.—Fuck.

No End to His Bad Luck.
John D. Shoop, at an Anti-Cigarette league banquet, explained his feelings in the story of the colored man.

"How are you getting along, Lazarus?" asked his master, interestedly.
"I gets along poorly," replied Lazarus, who complained of his misfortune at length. "Master John, I has such bad luck," says he, "that when I dies and is laid away in the tomb and the good Lord says to me, 'Lazarus, come forth,' I know I is sho' to come fifth."

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