

HIS WORD OF HONOR.

A Tale of the Blue and the Gray.

BY E. WERNER.

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CHAPTER II.

The young officer seemed to have expected this refusal. He advanced a step nearer and dropped the strictly formal tone used heretofore.

"Colonel, the interview I seek at Springfield is of infinite importance to me. I will be perfectly frank with you. I suppose you know the relation in which I stand to Mr. Harrison's family."

"The wealthy owner of the neighboring plantation, our most bitter enemy. Yes, I have heard of it. It was said that you were engaged to his daughter, and at the outbreak of the war made a sacrifice for your convictions."

"I did not make it; it was forced upon me. Mr. Harrison broke my engagement to his daughter, without permitting me even an explanation. The outbreak of hostilities prevented my hastening to my fiancée. I was forced to join my regiment. The letters I sent remained unanswered. I do not even know whether they reached her hands. For months I suffered the tortures of uncertainty. This morning an accident revealed that Miss Harrison, who, I supposed, had long since fled to some place of safety, was still in Springfield. It is the last, the only possibility of obtaining any certainty. I beseech you to grant it."

The colonel's eyes rested with evident sympathy on the young man, who was indeed his favorite, and whose ill-repressed emotion showed how keenly he suffered from this state of uncertainty; but he shook his head.

"Even should I grant you the leave of absence, and you reach the plantation unharmed, who will guarantee that Harrison, after what has occurred, will not see in you merely an officer in the enemy's service and deliver you up?"

"Deliver me up?" cried William, hotly. "The man who was betrothed

by eight o'clock this evening, I shall believe that he is either dead or dishonored."

William's eyes flashed, but they met his commanding officer's gaze, steadfastly.

"Believe the former! If I am alive at that hour, I will be here."

"Then go—on your word of honor."

"On my word of honor."

William saluted and left the room. The colonel gazed after him a few seconds, then said in low tones:

"Poor boy! I would ten times rather have sent him to meet the enemy than into this temptation."

CHAPTER III.

An Unexpected Visitor.

It was the afternoon of the same day. The sun was lower in the west, but the heat had not yet lessened, and all the blinds in the spacious mansion of Springfield were closed. The extensive estate had, as yet, been spared the devastation of war. It was in the immediate vicinity of one of the principal recruiting-stations in the South and owed it to this circumstance alone that, for the present at least, it could afford its inmates absolute safety.

A pleasant dusk pervaded the sitting-room, whose doors opened upon the wide terrace. The glaring sunlight in the garden outside could not find its way into the apartment, whose doorways were protected by blinds and curtains; and a little fountain, whose jet rose amid a circle of tropical plants, diffused its cool, glittering drops through the sultry atmosphere.

A young girl of perhaps eighteen was half reclining in a rocking-chair. Her little head with its wealth of dark hair was flung wearily back, her eyes were closed, and the long black lashes formed a sharp contrast to the pretty but somewhat pallid face. Her thin white dress, which, though intended

weeks. What is the use of this fierce haste? Why should the wedding take place beside my father's sick-bed?"

"Because it is your father's last wish and will, as you know from his own lips. He wants to know that you will be safe and sheltered in a husband's arms when danger assails us, and he has my promise that I will protect you and his property to my last breath."

"As soon as it becomes yours—I don't doubt it."

Edward's brows contracted angrily. A dark frown shadowed his face.

"What does that mean, Florence? Do you doubt my love? You know that it is bestowed on you alone, not your estates, which, in the storms of war, may be destroyed, like so many which have already been ruined. You must trust me. I shall certainly not sacrifice you to any principle, as others have done."

The allusion was distinct enough. Florence's head drooped, but her tone betrayed rising indignation, as she replied:

"Was I sacrificed? You say so, and so does my father, but I have never heard it from William's lips, and you were always his enemy. I cannot understand his giving up the struggle so quickly, not even making an attempt to change my views, and sometimes I fear—"

She did not finish the sentence, but her eyes, which rested with unmistakable suspicion on her cousin's features, expressed the thought which she did not utter in words. But there was no change in his countenance, and the answer was equally unmoved and cold.

"Surely, you read the letter in which he broke with your father? Was not that plain enough? He knew the price that would enable him to possess you. It would have cost him only a single word to call you his; yet, instead, he delivered a political lecture on manly honor, duty, conviction and the rest of the set phrases. Well, he followed his conviction and—gave you up."

The young girl's pale face began to flush, and her lips were closely compressed. This was the goad which had conquered her resistance, forced her into the new bond; it produced its effect now.

"Yes, he gave me up," she repeated, bitterly. "Well—I have given him up, too."

"And cannot you yet shake off the memory? You have been candid with me, Florence, cruelly candid. I was forced to hear from your lips that that other still held the first place in your heart, that only filial duty won your consent to my suit. Be it so! I will venture the risk, even with this statement. I will cope with this arrogant German, who does not know what love is, who has never felt the full pulse of genuine passion. For me, no price is too high for the prize of possessing you. I would overthrow all that stood between us, were it even what I held highest. Resist as you may, I shall yet win you—and your love."

There was really a touch of genuine passion in the words, and the ardent gaze which rested on the young girl proved that Edward Harrison was not playing a mere game of calculation. Florence unresistingly left the hand he had seized in his clasp. She was half-unconsciously under the thrall of this man, whom she feared, for whom no voice in her heart pleaded, yet who exerted an almost demoniacal power over her.

(To be continued.)

A Prehistoric Cemetery.

Workmen terracing King hill, an old landmark of northwestern Missouri, which is to be converted into a residence suburb of St. Joseph, have unearthed a prehistoric cemetery. The remains of a race of dwarfs, not allied with any tribe known to have inhabited this territory, and unaccounted for by Indian legends, repose on the summit of King hill. A feature remarkable in itself and especially marked in connection with the dwarfish remains of prehistoric man found in this summit is the discovery of human bones, evidently those of a giant, probably more than seven feet tall and big boned. Low, flat heads, with small intelligence and marked animal propensities, characterized this people. Heavy jaws and strong, well-preserved teeth carry the records of their lives forward. Brutes, human but inhuman, self-reliant, they are savages of a lower order than any we know today. Yet they honored their dead. Shells such as are found on the banks of many inland streams, plentiful on the sandbars of the Missouri, overlooked by King hill, and stones of unusual hues, worthless in the commercial marts of today, the playthings of children, were deposited in the graves.—Chicago Record.

With the Comma Left Out.

"Whenever she asks me to do anything," soliloquized Mr. Meeker, pensively, "I always go and do it, like a fool."

"Yes," said Mrs. Meeker, who happened along in time to overhear him, "whenever I ask you to do anything you always go and do it like a fool."—Chicago Tribune.

Knew What He Wanted.

Canvasser—"I have here a work—"
Master of the House—"I can't read."
Canvasser—"But your children—"
Master of the House—"I have no children (triumphantly), nothing but a cat." Canvasser—"Well, you want something to throw at the cat." He took the book.

In life's battle one must either be a struggler or a straggler.

A Brand New Christmas

(For the Children.)

The Barnes children couldn't have any Christmas this year. They live in the country, and there were trees enough, to be sure. But there was nothing to put on one to make it look "sparkly," as a tree ought to look, and there was not a penny to spend for tree trimmings.

The Barnes children, however, had a jollier time than they had ever had with a tree. Joe said so, and George said so, too; and Grace and Winnie agreed with them. This is how it was done. A delightful young auntie lives with them. They call her the Lady with a Bright Idea. She always has a new bright idea just in the nick of time, but this year it did seem as if the idea was brighter than ever. It fairly shone.

"We'll give the presents in a funny way," she said to the children. "Yes, we'll give them in two or three funny ways. You'll see!"

There was a very mysterious feeling in the air Christmas morning. Everybody looked at everybody else, and then they all smiled. Something good was going to happen. When the breakfast



THEN OFF THE CHILDREN RAN. plates were lifted, there were little envelopes tied with gay ribbons. Such a time as the children had untying them! In each was a card, and on each card was a verse, signed, "The Christmas Postman."

Joe shouted as he read his aloud: "When you get this, dear Joe, You must straight away go And look under your bed, But pray don't bump your head." Joe jumped up, but auntie called, "Here, you must wait until the rest have read their notes, and all start at once."

The verses were all short. George read his next: "Look behind your closet door, For a great big package on the floor." Grace read:

"In the northeast chamber, out of sight, Under the coverlet, snowy white, You'll find a gift if you search just right."

Last came Winnie's: "A present lies on the garret stair; I think that Santa Claus dropped it there."

Then off the children ran to search for their presents. Such a stamping and scuffling and shouting as the

grown people heard! Pretty soon they came rushing in, one after the other. Then such an untying of strings and tearing off of wrapping papers as there was!

"Auntie! Auntie!" they shouted. "These are your presents! You are the Christmas postman!"

Auntie's gifts were not to be mistaken. She made them nearly always.

Joe's was an envelope album for scraps. Joe liked to cut all sorts of things out of newspapers and magazines. The scrap-album was made of twenty-six big brown envelopes, tied together by cords, in a pasteboard cover. They could be taken out when filled and new ones put in.

George's "great big package" was a wooden box made into a nice little store. It had shelves and counters, and a set of scales besides.

Grace's gift was a fancy work bag, with pockets holding embroidery silks. It had some crochet needles and a pair of embroidery hoops, and some pretty doilies ready to begin work on.

Winnie's gift was an afghan, pillow and strap for her doll carriage. The afghan was made out of pink and white worsted knitted in stripes. The pillow was of pink silk, over which was a cover of Swiss with a lace ruffle. The strap was a piece of white ribbon with little pink flowers painted on it.

As the children were exclaiming over these gifts, they were startled by a loud noise at the door that led into the dining room from the hall. Bang! Bang! The boys ran to open the door. There stood their father. He had slipped away while they were upstairs, and they had not missed him. He had a trunk, covered with cotton and trimmed with evergreen, on his shoulder.

"Express from Santa Claus," he cried.

"Ho, ho! Express from Santa Claus!" the children shouted, dancing around the room.

It was a regular Christmas trunk, when opened, "Merry Christmas," was printed in green letters on a white ground inside the lid, and everything in the trunk was done up in white paper, tied with green cord. In each was stuck a sprig of evergreen. In the trunk were all the presents from papa and mamma to the children, and from the three grown folks to each other. Most of the gifts were homemade, and not costly, but all were received with delight. There never was such a jolly Christmas trunk!

"Why, we haven't given our presents to each other!" cried Winnie at last. Each of the four children always had some trifling gift for the other three.

"I'll tell you a nice way to give them!" exclaimed auntie. "All mark your presents with the first names of those they are for, and bring them to me. Then we'll go to the sitting-room and play 'hunt the thimble' with each bundle. The one whose name is on it must go out while we hide it." And off they trooped to collect their bundles and to spend a merry morning hunting for them.—Annie Willis McCullough in Youth's Companion.

Conformity to the teachings of Christ will restore the prestige of the church. Freedom to worship God is inalienable.—Rev. W. H. Tubb.

KEEP OLD SANTA CLAUS.



SANTA CLAUS AS WE KNOW HIM.

If all the little fictitious, fairy tales and fancies dear to children were to be given up, what would become of the imaginations of the coming generation? We have been called a practical people. So we are. If anything, too practical. As we grow older the realities of life crowd thick and fast upon us. Why then seek to destroy one of the most beautiful ideals of child life?

Let the little ones hang up their stockings on Christmas eve. Let them believe in the dear old white-bearded man who is one of their happiest illusions, and, above all, let them be real children while they may, not miniature men and women, tired of the ideal side of life before they leave the nursery for the schoolroom.

Yes, we believe that the best and truest mother can with perfect justice to both her children and herself conscientiously decide to keep Santa Claus in the especial niche in which

he has sat enthroned for ages past. Give us Santa Claus! Throw the good old saint out into the snow! Put away those delicious Christmas eve dreams, when every stir in the household after dusk meant the stamp of a reindeer? Bring up a child without the belief in the chimney and its capacity to stretch on Christmas eve? No; a thousand times no!

There's too little poetry in life now. Let the children have all of it they can get. Says a recent writer: "I wish there was a grown-up Santa Claus. I'd love to believe in him, and I would not thank anyone who told me he wasn't true. I'd listen to his sleigh bells with something very much like rapture, I'm afraid. It wouldn't be for the presents, either. That isn't why the children love Santa Claus. They love him because he means that somewhere there's a great-hearted creature, who is thinking of them and planning all the year through to delight them."

When Goldlocks and I stopped running we were outside of Fairyland, but we could still hear the puddings rolling softly about and Santa Claus laughing—while still upward flew the kite, skyward, with its plum pudding tail.

WHY SANTA CLAUS IS CUPID.

Santa Claus, the dear old stupid, Paid a call last night to Cupid. Brought him posies, gay old givers! Silver arrows and a quiver.

Then the wakeful boy, upstarting, Saw the saint in haste departing— Seized an arrow, thankless Cupid, Winged it straight at "dear Old Stupid."

This is the way, and that the reason, Merry maids, this Christmas season, Find his bounty overflowing— Revel in its rich bestowing.

This is why, the country over, Morning smiled on lass and lover. This is why the dear old stupid Claims tonight that he is Cupid.



Goldlocks and I were walking back of Moss valley and happened to step together, upon the Enchanted Flying Phantom Field. In a moment we were flying through the air, and in less time than you can count six plainly we were once more in Fairyland, under Tamalpais mountain.

And then what do you think we saw? Santa Claus picking plum puddings from trees! Real plum puddings from real trees!

This was in the plum pudding orchard which the fairies planted, long ago, for Santa Claus. He was whistling and chuckling and laughing, "Ho! ho! ho!" and sometimes slyly winking one eye as he viewed the many growing heaps of puddings as he laid them under the trees, and thought what jollity there would be Christmas day when they were eaten—and what tum-yaches afterwards!

Goldlocks thought the plum pudding orchard wonderful. It was watered by sparkling rills and was surrounded by hedges upon which candied nuts and oranges were growing. These hedges were made all of Christmas trees, the burning little candles on which furnish Santa Claus light at night to work by. He will have only the candles to work by because they seem to bring him nearer to his mil-



PICKING PLUM PUDDINGS. lions of dear children, and—a secret—Santa Claus is in as much of a hurry for Christmas eve as you are.

The plum pudding orchard had hundreds and thousands of trees in it. The way the trees came to bear plum puddings was this: They were grafted. The bread-fruit trees furnished grafts for plum pudding dough, and grafts from rasin grape vines, citron trees and current bushes supplied other "fixings." The birds brought oak and holly leaves and Christmas berries for decorations. The sun browned the puddings just right and the leaves on the plum pudding trees turned snowy white just in time to furnish plum pudding bags—one for every pudding and not one to spare. The stems grew into pudding bag strings. The trees bent low with their weight of puddings. The air smelled as sweet as a thousand Christmas dinners all in one!

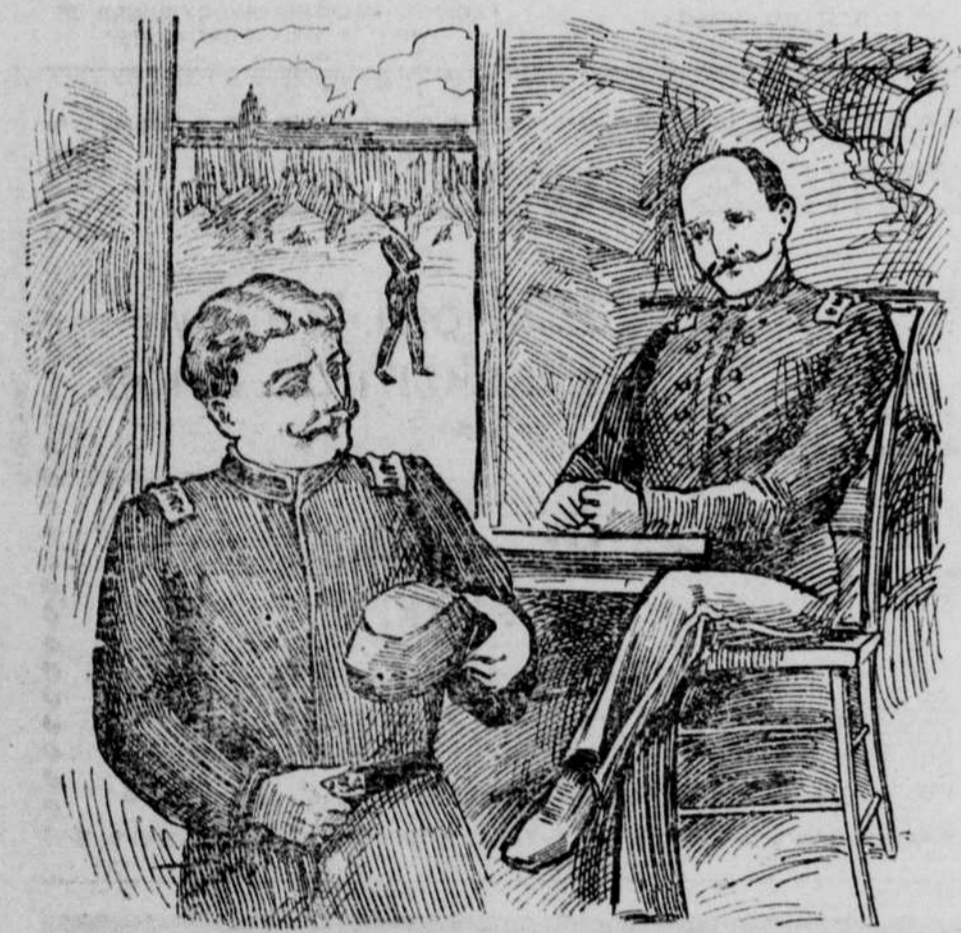
When Santa Claus had pulled all the puddings from the trees new ones sprouted—for birthdays and next Thanksgiving.

Jingle, jingle, tinkle, tinkle! Santa Claus' reindeer stamped their little feet until all the bells on their harnesses jingled and tinkled again, while waiting for Santa Claus and the thousand fairies who helped him to load the puddings into his sleigh to carry them to the Boy Proof Pantry of Ten Thousand Shelves. Some fairies, when the first sleigh load was on its way to the pantry, gathered the small piles of puddings into one great heap. Then along came the bad boy fairy, tied two dozen puddings together by the pudding bag strings and fastened them to his kite, which drew the long string of puddings away up into the sky.

One fairy, leaning backward to watch the kite, lost his balance and fell against the small mountain of puddings. They began to roll and roll and chased each other and chased us, but they were not hurt one bit. Santa Claus laughed louder than ever when he came back and saw the fun and he winked one eye at the bad boy fairy and shook one finger at him, as he saw the boy stick in his thumb and pull out a plum.

When Goldlocks and I stopped running we were outside of Fairyland, but we could still hear the puddings rolling softly about and Santa Claus laughing—while still upward flew the kite, skyward, with its plum pudding tail.

No word is ill spoken if it be not ill taken.—Proverb.



"THEN GO—ON YOUR WORD OF HONOR."

to his daughter—the man whom he once called son?"

"Everything is possible in these times. Surely you must know his character."

"I expect any act of hostility toward in his house. He is a southern gentleman, and a man of honor. I am safe with him."

"We will hope so; but another and graver peril threatens you there: If you are still regarded as the son of the house, every effort will be made to win you over to their cause. Suppose that—you should not return?"

William started as if an insult had been hurled in his face.

"Colonel, I am an honorable man."

"I know it; but you are human. You are young and passionately in love. Even the strongest natures succumb to such a conflict. At that time, you had no choice, you say. Probably it will be so now. And when the prize is before you, when your affianced wife weeps and pleads, and the whole happiness of your life depends on a single word—avoid the temptation, Lieutenant Roland. I advise you as a friend."

The young officer had turned pale, but his voice sounded firm and resolute as he replied:

"I beg you to grant me the leave of absence—on my word of honor."

Burney paced up and down the room several times in silence; at last he paused.

"At the utmost, I could grant you only the afternoon. You must return at sunset, and it is a long distance. You will have barely three hours at Springfield."

"A single one would suffice for the conversation on which my whole future depends—I repeat my request."

"So be it then. With caution, it may perhaps be possible to avoid the peril which threatens you on the way. I shall rely upon your prudence."

"Depend upon it, colonel."

Burney approached the young man and, putting his hand on his shoulder, said with deep earnestness:

"Till sunset then! It is now noon. If Lieutenant Roland has not returned

only for house-wear, was trimmed with rich lace, harmonized with the costly furniture of the room. In the dreamy twilight, the dainty white-robed figure was as charming as one of the fragrant blossoms nodding over the edge of the fountain.

One of the doors leading into the interior of the house was softly opened, and an old negro appeared on the threshold.

Noiselessly closing it again, he cautiously approached his young mistress, but she started from her light slumber and sat erect.

"What is it, Ralph? Does my father want me?"

"No, miss, master is still asleep; but Mr. Harrison has come back and asks if he can see Miss Florence."

"Edward?" The young lady hesitated a moment, then, sinking into her former attitude, she said faintly: "Let him come."

Ralph withdrew; and directly after, a young man, fine-looking, but with an arrogant, self-conscious manner, entered the room.

"How is my uncle?" he asked quickly. "What I heard from the servants outside did not sound very consoling. Is he worse?"

"I fear so," replied Florence, softly. "He had a bad night, and the increased weakness is alarming. He fell asleep an hour ago, and I used the opportunity to get a little rest."

Edward Harrison drew up a chair and sat down.

"Excuse me if I disturb you. I have just come from the city. My friend, Captain Wilson, accompanied me; and the justice of the peace, with the other witnesses, will arrive at the appointed time. All the preparations are made, so that the wedding can take place this evening."

A slight tremor ran through the young girl's frame, and there was a tone of fear in her voice as she asked:

"Today—must it be?"

"I thought we had arranged it. Surely you consented."

"Yes; but I hoped you would allow me a little time—a few months or