

HIS WORD OF HONOR.

A Tale of the Blue and the Gray.

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CHAPTER I.

A Soldier's Honor.

The rays of the noonday sun were beating down with the scorching glow known only to the South. In the hot, shimmering air every object seemed steeped in radiant light, and even the forest afforded no coolness, for it, too, was pervaded by the sultry atmosphere, and beneath the huge trees the burning breath of noon was still felt.

Under one of these trees, whose branches, heavy with foliage, extended a long distance, two young men had flung themselves on the ground, apparently for a short rest.

Both wore the uniform of the Union army, one being a lieutenant and the other a surgeon. The latter, who had a slender figure somewhat below the middle height, expressive features and dark hair, lay in a comfortable attitude on the turf, listening calmly to his companion, who had started up and was pacing hurriedly to and fro. The powerful form, thick, fair hair and blue eyes unmistakably revealed German ancestry; but a cloud shadowed the frank, youthful face, and the voice trembled with passionate emotion.

"I must go, cost what it may! Since I knew that Harrison and his daughter were on the plantation, I have had no rest. Say what you please, John, I am going!"

"My dear William, you are on the eve of doing a very foolish thing," said the surgeon, without changing his comfortable position. "I advise you, as a friend, to drop it; the affair may be your death."

"What do I care for that! Certainly I will bring me there in two hours, and I can return before sunset. I'll venture it at any peril."

"And risk a bullet through your

wild ride into the enemy's country? You don't even know whether Miss Harrison wishes to see you—whether she did not agree when her father dismissed you so unceremoniously."

"No, no!" William impetuously retorted. "Florence has been deceived—forced; she has not received any of my letters, as I have not had a single line from her. Her father was always opposed to our engagement; we fairly extorted his consent. He gave it reluctantly, and promptly availed himself of the excuse afforded by the war to recall his promise."

John Maxwell shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, you can hardly blame him! He, a secessionist and slave-baron, and you with your humanistic ideas! You harmonize like fire and water, and you were always a thorn in the flesh of his nephew, the charming Edward. You stole from under his very eyes the wife on whom he had set his heart. He'll never forgive you. Conditions were imposed at the outbreak of the war?"

"Yes—shameful ones! I was to deny my convictions, desert and betray the cause I serve and fight in the ranks of the enemy against our army. I rejected the dishonorable demand as it deserved."

"With the most reckless bluntness to the millionaire and future father-in-law. The Harrisons really are not so very much to blame. You would be an extremely troublesome son-in-law. I should have considered the matter a little. Where a bride and a fortune are at stake—"

"You would have practiced treason? John, don't make yourself worse than you are. Even you would have been incapable of it."

"Who talks of treason! You merely

"Certainly. I am especially anxious to have reliable information concerning the nature of the disease. The outbreak of an epidemic would be extremely inconvenient just now. When do you expect to be back?"

"In three hours, if necessary. But I had intended to ask leave of absence until evening on account of another matter, which I should like to attend to at the same time."

"Of course, if you wish," said Burney, absently. "Only send me some good news."

"The best in my power. At any rate, there is no time to lose. I will go at once."

The colonel nodded assent, and the other officers now joined in the conversation. The subject was discussed in all its bearings. If these cases were really the first in an impending epidemic, the matter was very serious.

At last Maxwell took his leave; but, in the act of going, approached his friend, who was standing silently at the window.

"Do you still persist in your resolve?" he asked, under his breath.

"Certainly. As soon as I get my leave I shall ride over."

"And perhaps be shot on the way? Good luck to you!"

"Thanks for the kind wish," said William, angrily. "Perhaps it will be fulfilled."

"Hardly. Men who, like you, are forever butting their heads against a wall, generally have uncommonly good fortune. Where the rest of us crack our skulls, they push the stone apart. Farewell, Will!"

He left the room. Doctor Maxwell did not spoil his friend by pretty speeches; that was evident. He took leave of the young officer who might "perhaps be shot on the way" as carelessly as if there was nothing in prospect save an ordinary ride. William scarcely heeded it; his mind was filled with other thoughts, and he availed himself of the first pause in the conversation to approach the colonel and request a brief private interview.

Burney opened the door of a small room adjoining, and the two men entered.

"Well, Lieutenant Roland, have you anything important to ask?" said the colonel, when they were alone.

"I merely wished to request a short leave of absence," replied the young man, with apparent calmness. "There is a family matter to be arranged which is of the utmost importance to me."

"And which you can arrange while on the march?"

"At least I hope so. I intend to visit relatives who live on a plantation only a few miles from here. I have just learned that I was in their immediate neighborhood."

The request was not singular, and was easily granted, yet something in the young man's face attracted the colonel's attention, and he inquired:

"What is the name of the plantation you desire to visit?"

William hesitated a moment, then slowly answered:

"Springfield."

Burney started.

"Springfield? That is beyond our outposts. Are you not aware that it is in the enemy's country?"

"I know it."

"And yet you wish to go there? It won't do. I cannot permit it."

"I ride a similar and far more dangerous ride a week ago on staff duty," replied William.

"That was in the service; duty required it; but this is a private affair, and I cannot permit one of my officers to risk his life for such a matter. No, Lieutenant Roland."

(To be continued.)

WHEN MEN MISS SUCCESS.

Idleness and Incompetency Keep the Business Novice Down.

Walter P. Phillips, the founder of the national newsgathering corporation known as the United Press, and the inventor of Phillips' telegraphic code, a typical, energetic American, who has put many young men in the newsgathering business, believes that the cause of failure everywhere among young business beginners lies in incompetence. Nine-tenths of the young men who are struggling for a name and place in the world are unfitted for the callings they have picked out for themselves. Besides an unlimited supply of energy and whole-heartedness in the work before him, the successful man of the future must know his business from A to Z. The next greatest drawback to success is idleness. Nothing worth while is accomplished without work, and plenty of it. Things do not happen without a cause, and behind every great life there are years of concentrated energy and tireless industry. Idleness will make any man a failure; intelligent work will land any man among the successful. It is all so simple and so trite that one hesitates to put the fact down in cold blood, and yet how few men recognize or, recognizing, live up to the axiom, that labor conquers all things! Idleness and the consciousness of incompetency should make any man ashamed of himself and drive him to do something that is worth the doing. It is within the grasp of every one to learn some one thing that will yield both pleasure and profit. Success comes only to those who seek it. The young man who is really in earnest will not have to be advised how to succeed. He may learn much by studying the failures of others, however, and he will always find, after a survey of the great legion of the unsuccessful, that two causes have brought them to their present misery—idleness and incompetency.—Saturday Evening Post.

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 covert, 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

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

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 dollies 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. Tubbs.

WHY SANTA CLAUS IS CUPID.

Santa Claus, the dear old stupid, Paid a call last night to Cupid. Brought him posties, gay old givert 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.



Goldilocks 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-maches afterwards!

Goldilocks thought the plum pudding orchard wonderful. It was watered by sparkling rills and was surrounded by hedges upon which candles and 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 Goldilocks 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 taken.—Proverb.



"WILL YOU ACCOMPANY ME?"

brain. You have probably forgotten that we are engaged in a war and that it is desertion for an officer to be absent from his regiment without leave. Court-martials are sometimes disagreeable in such cases, and it would be unfortunate if Lieutenant Roland should go out of the world by lynch-law."

The sarcasm of these words succeeded in producing an impression where sensible arguments might have failed. William Roland started and answered more quietly:

"What fancy have you taken into your head? Of course, I don't mean to go without leave. The colonel will not refuse it; we are doing nothing here. I must see and speak to Florence once more, even though I hazard my life to do it!"

"You lovers are always ready to risk your lives," said the young surgeon, carelessly. "Your feelings are forever at the boiling point. A strange condition of affairs. Let me feel your pulse!"

"Cease this jesting!" cried William, furiously. "Can't you curb your spirit of mockery even here? But how could I expect sympathy or appreciation from you where affairs of the heart are concerned!"

"From the heartless American!" retorted John. "Of course, heart and feeling are the prerogatives of the German. You have taken out a patent on them, and consider yourselves actually insulted if other people claim a little of the article, too. Here we are back again at the old point of dispute, over which we wrangled sufficiently as boys—the honor of our different nationalities."

"In which you usually came off worst."

"Yes; you had an abominable way of cudgeling German supremacy into me; and as you were the stronger, I generally yielded to your palpable arguments. But when there was anything which required brains and reflection, John Maxwell was summoned. Then you submitted to my authority, and, at the utmost, appeared on the scene when there was a drubbing to be given. Don't look so gloomy, Will; let us discuss the matter sensibly. What do you really expect to accomplish by this

needed to have remained passive and not fought at all, either for or against the Union; that would have been the wisest course."

"And a cowardly, pitiful one into the bargain! Am I alone to lag behind, when every one springs to arms? Let us drop the subject. Our views on this point are very widely sundered."

"They are on all points," said Maxwell, dryly. "I stick to it—this visit to the plantation is as useless as it is dangerous, but I don't flatter myself in the least with the hope of detaining you. You'll have your own way under all circumstances."

"Of course, I shall. I'm going to the colonel at once to ask for leave of absence. Will you accompany me?"

The young surgeon sighed. He was probably loath to resign his comfortable resting place, yet he rose slowly.

"I wish Colonel Burney would put you under arrest for three days, instead of giving you leave of absence," he said, emphatically. "But unfortunately, you are a favorite, and besides, it's an established fact that, if a man wants to commit a folly, everybody hastens to help him. So let us go!"

The regiment to which the young men belonged was stationed in the next village. After severe battles and arduous marches a short respite had been granted, but the men were to move in a few days. Constant bustle pervaded the usually quiet hamlet and was specially noticeable around the colonel's quarters. When Roland and Maxwell entered, they found several officers there. The commander himself, a man advanced in years, with a grave but kindly face, stood among a group of his subordinates, apparently discussing something with them.

"I am glad you have come, doctor!" he said to the surgeon. "I was just going to send for you. Lieutenant Davis has reported that two of his men are ill, and the symptoms appear very grave; he fears fever, and begs to have medical assistance as soon as possible. You will ride over to the outposts."

"I'll go at once," replied Maxwell. "I hope it will prove a false alarm, as has happened several times, but we'll soon ascertain."