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THE RED MITTEN.

A Charming Story of the Days of the Rebellion.

It was the afternoon of a clear, sharp January day of 1861, and the company numbered fully 200; there were men and women, boys and girls, lying and sitting about in masses, singly, by dozens, and by twos and threes, over the frozen surface of the beautiful Silver lake in Rockdale, a suburb of the flourishing city of E...

Among the crowd were many lads and lasses who imagined they were fond of skating, and came to Silver Lake for no other reason. It was singular, too, to note how much more gracefully the "outward roll," backward and forward, can be accomplished by joining hands or being linked together by a walking stick. These sticks in some instances proved non-conductors to the sympathetic thrill that pervaded the magnets of either end.

The positive and negative conditions were fully realized in the case of brawny John Horton and rosy-cheeked Abbie Latham, the daughter of the "Squire." She, with her plump, comely figure, and fresh, handsome face, lit up by a pair of laughing blue eyes, could have led awkward John, on or off skates, anywhere, with an apron-string or a thread for a conductor. Not with John. He could lead her nowhere; and the more the girl could balk and tantalize him the more she seemed to enjoy the skating and his company.

But the captor only held it before him and gently moved away. "Won't you give it to me?" he asked. "I will find the owner." "I can find the owner much easier than you. I can't trust you; you would fall and crush the poor thing in trying to deliver it." And she acutely laughed again.

"You made me fall," said John, in a pained tone. "You are always doing these things. If I skated more and studied less I'd soon be a much as adept as your friend Joe Staples, whom you are always praising." "You! Ha, ha, ha!" As graceful as Joe Staples! and the hilarity of the young maiden made John Horton's sluggish blood course through his veins till his face was as red as the scarlet kerchief that encircled his neck.

All the rest of that afternoon John was gloomy and silent. He moved around mechanically, or rather automatically, and his companion concluded to serve no more tricks upon him. The sport finished. The two then wended their way to the house of Mr. Latham, John's fair companion falling to rally him into anything like conversation. He answered her only in monosyllables, and seemed morose and preoccupied.

As he was about to take his leave, John said seriously and a little sarcastically, "Abbie, I'm going back to college to-morrow, and I hope you will enjoy the rest of the skating season in companionship more graceful than mine." "I hope I shall," replied she, in the same tone. "You must feel bad about something; perhaps it's the mitten; you had better put it on; I won't give it up. If I ever think enough of you to surrender it, I'll send it to you by express."

articles dispatched from home was at all times great, the bulk of contributions arriving at this festive season sorely tried the carrying capacity of all engaged in supplying the army at the front. And the occasions of opening the boxes and bundles, among both officers and privates, was most interesting and exciting. The officers of the 5th had arranged to have an "opening" in the colonel's quarters, and thither all who were not on duty repaired.

The evening was of course most enjoyable, for nearly every one had received from home some gift of token to remind him of a mother, sister, or sweetheart, sometimes of all three. Horton was present, cool, gloomy and indifferent. He did not expect any present. His family was scattered, and many of those nearest to him, to whose loving sympathy he would naturally turn at this time, had passed away. He did not feel in a sentimental sympathetic mood, and yet no particle of envy entered his mind in witnessing the gifts and prizes.

As the major held up a small paper box, however, and called out "Lieut. John W. Horton," the latter started and felt his face all aglow in an instant. He took the parcel, and in spite of entreaties in which not a few jokes were cracked at his expense, placed it in his pocket till the conclusion of the festivities, when he returned to the comfortable quarters he shared with Lieut. Carter.

Lieutenant Horton was puzzled and curious. After divesting himself of his overcoat he sat down, placed the box on the table, and in company with his companion lighted the solitary tudeon, determined to approach and unravel the mystery as became the philosopher. Carter got decidedly impatient before ever the outer wrappings were removed, and Horton concluded the proceedings with weighty deliberation. At last Horton shook from the box a little red mitten snugly wrapped in a piece of white tissue paper. No note of explanation appeared, and Horton met his companion's gaze with a look, in which were pictured at least half a dozen of the emotions that effect the human mind, the principal one being surprise.

For the next three evenings our hero was engaged in writing letters—or rather a letter—for no sooner was each one completed than it was torn in pieces and burned. Horton felt himself in a tight fix, and hoped the enemy would make a demonstration on the camp that he might get out of it. He had rather face a hundred cannon than undertake to acknowledge the reception of that mitten. He knew he had loved Miss Latham, but his big, sensitive soul had been terribly lacerated by her apparently heartless behavior, and he had concluded to become indifferent, not only to her, but to all womankind. This might be another of her heartless tricks, but when Jack recalled her words, "If I ever think enough of you to surrender it, I'll send it to you," he felt the little witch did entertain some regard for him. Still, as she had vouchsafed no kind of message with the surrender of the mitten, he was at a loss how to act. When he could not, he reasoned, "he would only laugh at me. Why can't these plaguey women tell a fellow along anyway?" he muttered to himself. "I can't find her to forget her—and now she has opened all my wounds afresh. She did it to tantalize me, but I'll show the first and the whole sex that I can't be tantalized. And then I'll look from his inner pocket an envelope, out of which he fished a little red object, on which he gazed for a few moments, as a naturalist might gaze upon a newly-discovered insect, with mingled curiosity and tenderness. The soldier sighed as he recalled the trifle, and going to the door of his tent gazed out into the darkness.

The darkness was nice and calm and the darkness almost impenetrable. Scarcely a sound disturbed the sleeping camp, and as the enemy across the Potomac were believed to intend no hostile demonstration the utmost precaution had not been taken to guard against surprise. As Jack stood gazing into the darkness a succession of flashes lit up the gloom and the sharp report of small arms broke the stillness of the night. For the first time claimed Jack, as he ratched for the accommodations. The long roll called the men into line, and in a few moments the regiment was prepared to receive the enemy. Being one of the officers at hand, Lieut. Horton was ordered by the colonel to go forward with a detail of men and ascertain the true state of affairs. Our pickets were retreating, firing being answered by stray shots from the enemy; no judgment of their number could be formed; but our panic-stricken pickets reported them to be 10,000 strong at least. Horton determined to keep cool and ascertain for himself the number of the enemy. He had had little experience of fighting as yet, and his position was by no means a pleasant one. In this maneuver an excellent judgment was proved, for after studying the situation as long as it was prudent he hastened to the colonel and informed him that the force of the enemy consisted of not more than a regiment of infantry moving directly for the camp.

A hot skirmish ensued, the fight lasting for an hour or two. The demonstration closed with the retreat of the enemy, on whose heels Lieut. Horton, whose fighting blood was unshaken with a tenacity that astonished his brother officers, Jack braved danger with an amazing coolness, and directed the fire of his men where it would do the most good. It was his ambition to capture somebody or something, and he did—a confederate coat and two private who were "surrounded" by himself and one of the soldiers. But Jack, fired by this success, rashly pressed ahead for more human plunder, when he was laid low by a bullet through his shoulder.

Jack Horton was the hero of that night, and was mentioned in the commander's report for his coolness, correct judgment, and unflinching bravery. It needed just such an occasion as this to bring out what was in the man; but Jack was modest and didn't presume he had done more than his duty. Christmas and New Year in the camp formed one of the brightest seasons of the hard-worked soldier in the years of the rebellion. Though the quantity of useful and useless

could not help feeling a little curious about how Miss Abbie would greet him if he chanced to meet her. He hadn't the remotest idea of calling on her, however. His time was the country's, and all his leisure moments were passed, even in those invalid days, in the study of military tactics. He did not want to be made a lion of, he did not pretend to resemble that noble animal in the least, so he stayed at home and studied his books.

Just before his return to the army he attended a fair at Rockdale in aid of the soldiers. The young ladies were the principal attractions at this as at all fairs; and among the young none were more attractive than Miss Abbie Latham. She drove a remarkable successful business at the flower stand, one of her principal patrons being Mr. Joseph Staples, who purchased at least half her stock and distributed it with a lavish hand. He had not gone to the war, but had, at least, and without compulsion, hired a substitute. His patriotism was ardent, as he assured Miss Abbie, but there were to him other glorious attractions nearer home.

Certainly, Lieut. Horton could not pay his respects to Miss Abbie. His face was paler, and his form had become more trim and manly than when she last saw him. His features, Abbie noticed, bore an expression of sadness and suffering; he moved without awkwardness, and all the young ladies declared him to be the handsomest soldier in the hall. He wore the sword that was voted for on this occasion, as he deserved to; Jack's heart throbbed a little as he met the gaze of the young lady; but she felt any emotion it must have been slight; she was very busy with her customers, and especially with her wholesale patron, Mr. Staples; yet, the lieutenant bade her good evening, and turned away, he saw her eyes drop and a faint blush steal over her cheeks. For two old friends, so long separated, the meeting was decidedly cold and formal, and Jack felt chilled to the marrow.

In the stirring events of the next two years Horton bore his full share—at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Antietam, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, down to Cold Harbor, where, at the head of his regiment, he fell desperately wounded in the terrible and unsuccessful assault on that stronghold. He was conveyed to the hospital at Washington in a seemingly hopeless condition, with several wounds, each of which was dangerous. The nurses moved among the wounded men like angels of mercy. Some of the soldiers lay in a stupor, some were raving in a delirium, and others writhing in agony. For days Horton's life hung on a thread, his fevered brain mercifully rendering him unconscious of suffering. As he awoke one morning, a soft and gentle hand was soothing his brow, where the dampness indicated that the fever was broken. He tried to open his eyes, but was too weak to speak; he could not, and many hours passed before he could discern what was around him. Since the night of the Cold Harbor fight his life had been a blank. He remembered nothing. And now he saw before him the physician and the nurse, with a sweet pale face that looked familiar, but he could not recall the name of his owner. Again trying to speak, the surgeon kindly interrupted, "Keep perfectly quiet, all will be well, and the female attendant, at his motion, withdrew.

The next morning his dim vision discerned the same pale and anxious face; and a gleam of wondering inquiry passed over his countenance as he gazed upon her. At last he feebly whispered: "Where am I?" "In the hospital and with friends," she answered gently. He would have spoken more, but she withdrew. The next day he was stronger, and he asked: "Where have I seen you?" "At a sign from the doctor the nurse answered: "At your old home. Don't you know me? I'm Abbie Latham, and you are getting better now and will soon be well."

Jack was strong enough to begin to collect his thoughts, which were, of course, at once concentrated on his nurse. He improved wonderfully under her care, and one bright morning occurred the last conversation we shall record in this romantic sketch. Miss Latham was sitting by the side of his cot arranging a bouquet. The wounded man had begun to feel like his own self, and permission was given him to converse all he desired. "How long have you been in the hospital, Abbie?" "More than a year," she replied in a sweet, womanly voice. Jack thought he had never beheld a fairer creature. If she was beautiful as a girl, the woman he had witnessed had touched and charmed all that was lovable and womanly in her nature. She was no longer a girl—she was a tender, thoughtful woman.

"You have saved my life," said Jack, his eyes filled with tears. "Me! no! Your strength has triumphed. I have done what little I could. Oh, you were so terribly hurt! And here her eyes filled and her bosom heaved as she took his hand and gently pushed the brown, curling locks away from his forehead. Jack never had felt so happy before in his life, despite the solemn character of the conversation. "I can never repay you, Abbie. I'm only sorry for that. But if I dare I hope—"

"Perhaps you can, Jack," she replied, with the sweetest and most convincing smile. "I found something in your inner vest pocket which has paid me as a girl; the sooner she took from a blood-stained envelope the little red mitten. "Then you know by that token that I had loved—at least had never forgotten you," said Jack, a little confused. "Yes; and if my woman's sense had not told me, your talk in delirium would have proved it."

Jack mentally thanked heaven that he had been crazy. "But, Jack, why didn't you answer my letter? It was cruel of you." "Your letter?" "Yes; the one I sent by post to apprise you of my present. Mr. Staples took it to the office." "And I never received it! Do you suppose that fellow was mean enough—"

"No, dear Jack. Don't get excit-

ed. Let us suppose nothing. All's well that ends well." The little red mitten is a treasured relic in the Horton family, and it has been a wondering question to several chums that gladden the household why mamma has never knit a mate to it.

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