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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...

Among the crowd were many lads and lassies 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.

John blushed at his awkwardness, and held out his hand to receive the mitten. 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."

"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."

"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."

Among the earliest volunteer regiments that left for the seat of war in the summer of 1861 was the 1st Massachusetts, with Lieut. Horton as an officer of company K. Like hundreds of others he abandoned his books for the sword, and had passed nights and days in study and drill to fit himself for his new position.

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, reading, or studying was sure to be seen in abstract thought, walking about the streets of the camp or in the region of the country immediately around.

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.

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 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.

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 its 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 dared 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.

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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