



SEVEN QUESTIONS OF LIFE.

I. An infant, wailing in his fright. At landing in this world of fret; Afraid of dark, afraid of light; With unknown troubles to be met; We cry: "Ah, see the lovely pet!" And "How much money will he get?"



CHAPTER X—CONTINUED.

He was a great whip, that man David Parish, who had built a big mansion at Ogdensburg and owned so much of the north country those days. He was a gentleman when the founders of the proud families of to-day were dickering in small merchandise. Indeed, one might look in vain for such an establishment as his north of Virginia. This side the Atlantic there was no stable of horses to be compared with that he had—splendid English thoroughbreds, the blood of which is now in every great family of American horses. And, my faith! he did love to put them over the road. He went tearing up hill and down at a swift gallop, and the roads were none too smooth in that early day. Before leaving home he had sent relays ahead to await his coming every 15 miles of the journey; he always did that if he had far to go. This time he had posted them clear to the harbor. The teams were quickly shifted; then we were off again with a crack of the whip and a toot of the long horn. He held up in the swamps, but where footing was fair, the high-mettled horses had their heads and little need of urging. We halted at an inn for a sip of something and a bite to eat.

CHAPTER XI.

It was, indeed, tougher business than we had yet known—a dash into the enemy's country, where my poor head was in excellent demand. D'ri and I were to cross the lake with a band of raiders, a troop of 40, under my command. We were to rescue some prisoners in a lockup on the other side. They were to be shot in the morning, and our mission therefore admitted of no delay. Our horses had been put aboard a brig at midnight, and soon after the noon mess we dropped down the lake, going into a deep, wooded cove south of the Grenadier island. There we lay waiting for nightfall. A big wind was howling over the woods at sunset, and the dark came on its wings an hour ahead of time. The night was black and the lake noisy when we got under way, bound for a flatboat ferry. Our skipper, it turned out, had little knowledge of those waters. He had shortened sail, and said he was not afraid of the weather. The wind, out of the southeast, came harder as it drove us on. Before we knew it, the whole kit and boodle of us were in a devil of a shakeup there in the broad water. D'ri and I were down among the horses and near being trampled under in the roll. We tried to put about then, but the great gusts of wind made us lower sail and drop

anchor in a hurry. Soon the horses were all in a tumble and one on top of the other. We had to jump from back to back to save ourselves. It was no pretty business, I can tell you, to get to the stairway. D'ri was stripped of a boot-leg, and I was cut in the chin by a front hoof, going ten feet or so to the upper deck. To the man who was never hit in the chin by a horse's hoof let me say there is no such remedy for a proud spirit. Bullets are much easier to put up with and keep a civil tongue in one's head. That lower deck was a kind of horses' hell. We had to let them alone. They got astraddle of one another's necks, and were cut from ear to fetlock—those that lived, for some of them, I could see, were being trampled to death. How many I never knew, for suddenly we hit a reef there in the storm and the black night. I knew we had drifted to the north shore, and as the sea began to wash over us it was every man for himself. The brig went up and down like a sledge-hammer, and at every blow her sides were cracking and caving. She keeled over suddenly, and was emptied of horse and man. A big wave flung me far among the foundering horses. My fingers caught in a wet mane; I clung desperately between crowding flanks. Then a big wave went over us. I hung on, coming up astride my capture. He swam vigorously, his nose high, blowing like a trumpet. I thought we were in for a time of it, and had very little hope for any landing, save in kingdom come. Every minute I was head under in the wash, and the roaring filled me with that mighty terror of the windfall. But, on my word, there is no captain like a good horse in bad water. Suddenly I felt him hit the bottom and go forward on his knees. Then he reared up, and began to jump in the sand. A big wave washed him down again. He fell on his side in a shallow, but rose and ran wearily over a soft beach, in the blackness around me I could see nothing. A branch whipped me in the face, and I ducked. I was not quick enough; it was like fencing in the dark. A big branch hit me, raising the withers of my horse, and I rolled off headlong in a lot of bushes. The horse went on, out of hearing, but I was glad enough to lie still, for I had begun to know of my bruises. In a few minutes I took off my boots and emptied them and wrung my blouse, and lay back, cursing my ill luck.

But that year of 1813 had the kick of ill fortune in it for every mother's son of us there in the north country. I have ever noticed that war goes in waves of success or failure. If we had had Brown or Scott to lead us that year, instead of Wilkinson, I believe it had had a better history. Here was I in the enemy's country. God knew where, or how, or when I should come out of it. I thought of D'ri and how it had gone with him in that hell of waters. I knew it would be hard to drown him. We were so near shore, if he had missed the rocks I felt sure he would come out safely. I thought of Louisa and Louise, and wondered if ever I should see them again. Their faces shone upon me there in the winy darkness, and one as brightly as the other. Afterwhiles I drew my wet blouse over me and went to sleep, shivering.

on either side of the water that year. As my feet sank deeper in the soft earth I felt as if I were going down to my grave. The soldiers led them into the gap, standing them close together, backs to me. The squad drew off. The prisoners stood erect, their faces turning up a little, as if they were looking into the clear, blue sky. I could see them waver as they stood waiting. The sharpshooters advanced, halting as they raised their rifles. To my horror, I saw the prisoners were directly between me and them. Great God! was I also of that little company about to die? But I dared not move a step. I stood still, watching, trembling. An officer in a shining helmet was speaking to the riflemen. His helmet seemed to jump and quiver as he moved away. Those doomed figures began to reel and sway as they waited. The shiny barrels lifted a little, their muzzles pointing at them and at me. The corn seemed to duck and tremble as it watched the volley. A great black ball, shot across the sky in a long curve, and began to fall. Then came the word, a flash of fire, a cloud of smoke, a roar of rifles that made me jump in my tracks. I heard bullets culling the corn. I felt the dirt fly up and scatter over me, but was unharmed, a rigid, motionless reel of straw. I saw my countrymen reel, their legs go limp as rags, their



STUCK THE STAKE IN FRONT OF ME TO STEADY MYSELF AND STOOD STIFF AS ANY SCARECROW IN CANADA.

bodies fall silently forward. The soldiers stood a moment, then a squad went after the dead with litters. Forming in fours, they marched away as they had come, their steps measured by that regular rap! rap! rap! of the drum. The last rank went out of sight. I moved a little and pulled the stake, and quickly stuck it again, for there were voices near. I stood waiting as stiff as a poker. Some men were running along the beach; two others were coming through the corn. They passed within a few feet of me on each side. I heard them talking with much animation. They spoke of the wreck. When they were all by me I faced about, watching them. They went away in the timber, down to a rocky point, where I knew the wreck was visible.

upon my collar. In all my life I had never saw a hat so big. Through the break in it I could see a farmhouse. In a jiffy the horse had cleared a fence, and was running, with the zest of terror, in a dusty road. I grew angry at myself as we tore along—I knew not why. It was a rage of discomfort, I fancy, for somehow, I never felt so bounded and cluttered, so up in the air and out of place in my body. The saber was working loose and hammering my knee; the big hat was rubbing my nose, the straw chafing my chin. I had something under my arm that would sway and whack the side of the horse every leap he made. I bore upon it hard, as if it were the jewel of my soul. I wondered why, and what it might be. In a moment the big hole of my hat came into conjunction with my right eye. On my word, it was the stake! How it came there I have never known, but, for some reason I held to it. I looked neither to right nor left, but sat erect, one hand on the hilt of my saber, the other in the mane of the horse, knowing full well I was the most hideous-looking creature in the world. If I had come to the gate of heaven I believe St. Peter would have dropped his keys. The straw worked up, and a great wad of it hung under my chin like a bushy beard. I would have given anything for a sight of myself, and laughed to think of it, although feeling a deadly chill, as I knew. But I was young and had no fear in me those days. Would that a man could have his youth on his death-bed! It was a leap in the dark, but I was ready to take my chances.

Evidently I was nearing a village. Groups of men were in the shady thoroughfare; children thronged the dooryards. There was every sign of a holiday. As we neared them I caught my saber under my knee, and drew my hands into the long sleeves and waved them wildly, wheezing like an Indian. They ran back to the fences with a start of fear. As I passed they cheered loudly, waving their hats and rearing with laughter. An old horse, standing before an inn, broke his halter and crashed over a fence. A scared dog ran for his life in front of me, yelping as he leaped over a stone wall. Geese and turkeys flew in the air as I neared them. The people had seemed to take me for some village youth on a masquerade. We flashed into the open country before the sound of cheering had died away. On we went over a long strip of hard soil, between fields, and off in the shade of a thick forest. My horse began to tire. I tried to calm him by gentle words, but I could give him no confidence in me. He kept on, laboring hard and breathing heavily, as if I were a ton's weight. We came to another clearing and fields of corn. A little out of the woods, and near the road, was a log house white-washed from earth to eaves. By the gate my horse went down. I tumbled heavily in the road, and turning, caught him by the bits. The big hat had shot off my head; the straw had fallen away. A woman came running out of the open door. She had bare feet, a plump and cheery face.

"Tonnerre!" said she. "Qu'est ce que cela?"

"My countrywoman," said I, in French, feeling in my under-trousers for a bit of silver, and tossing it to her, "I am hungry."

"And I have no food to sell," said she, tossing it back. "You should know I am of France and not of England. Come, you shall have enough, and for no price but the eating. You have a tired horse. Take him to the stable, and I will make you a meal."

[To Be Continued.]

TRULY A MODEL SERVANT. Was Somewhat Bungling in Serving Table, but Had a good Excuse. Miss Ida M. Tarbell, the writer, was talking at her home in New York about servants, relates the Tribune. "I have been reading," she said, "John Foster's 'Life of Dickens,' and the book has reminded me of the pompous Foster's body servant, Henry. Dickens described Henry during his last visit to America. 'The man, it seems, was devoted to his master. From one year's end to the other he never needed a reprimand. 'It was therefore surprising one night, when Foster was entertaining several writers at dinner, to see the scrupulous Henry make error after error. He upset a plate of soup, and Foster uttered a cry of alarm. He forgot to serve sauce for the fish, and his master said, 'Why Henry!' Altogether he made the excellent dinner seem a slovenly and poor repast. 'When, at the end, he had set the port and walnuts on the table, Henry leaned over Foster's chair and said in a tremulous voice: 'Please, sir, can you spare me now? My house has been on fire for the last two hours.'"

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