

SECRET SERVICE BEING THE HAPPENINGS OF A NIGHT IN RICHMOND IN THE SPRING OF 1865 THE PLAY BY WILLIAM GILLETTE; BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

SYNOPSIS.

Mrs. Varney, wife of a Confederate general, has lost one son and another is dying from wounds. She reluctantly gives her consent for Wilfred, the youngest, to join the army if his father consents.

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

"I am sure he would be more than pleased," smiled Lieutenant Maxwell, as Edith left the room and hastened up the stairs.

"We haven't heard so much cannonading today, lieutenant," said Mrs. Varney. "Do you know what it means?"

"I don't think they are quite positive, ma'am, but they can't help looking for a violent attack to follow."

"I don't see why it should quiet down before an assault."

"Well, there is always a calm before a storm," said the lieutenant. "It might be some signal, or it might be they are moving their batteries to open on some special point of attack. They are trying every way to break through our defenses, you know."

"It's very discouraging. We can't seem to drive them back this time."

"We're holding them where they are, though," said Maxwell proudly. "They'll never get in unless they do it by some scurvy trick; that's where the danger lies. We are always looking out for it, and—"

At this moment Edith Varney reentered the room. She had left her hat upstairs with the official-looking envelope, and had taken time to glance at a mirror and then to thrust a red rose in her dark hair.

"Lieutenant Maxwell," she said, extending a folded paper, "here is your receipt—"

The butler's words to some one in the hall interrupted her further speech.

"Will you jest kinly step his way, suh!" she heard Jonas say, and as Edith turned she found herself face to face with Captain Thorne!

CHAPTER III.

Orders to Captain Thorne.

On the sleeves of Captain Thorne's coat the insignia of a captain of Confederate artillery were displayed; his uniform was worn, soiled, and ill-fitting, giving honorable evidence of hard service; his face was pale and thin and showed signs of recent illness, from which he had scarcely recovered. In every particular he was a marked contrast to Lieutenant Maxwell.

"Miss Varney," he said, bowing low. "We were expecting you," answered Edith, giving her hand to Thorne.

"Here's Captain Thorne, mamma!" Mrs. Varney shook hands with him graciously while her daughter turned once more to the other man, with the acknowledgment of the order, which she handed to him.

"I wasn't very long writing it, was I, Lieutenant Maxwell?" she asked.

"I've never seen a quicker piece of work, Miss Varney," returned that young man, putting the note in his belt and smiling as he did so. "When you want a clerkship over at the government offices, you must surely let me know."

"You would better not commit yourself," said Edith jestingly; "I might take you at your word."

"Nothing would please me more," was the prompt answer. "All you have got to do is just apply, and refer to me, of course."

"Lots of other girls are doing it," continued Edith half-seriously. "They have to live. Aren't there a good many where you are?"

"Well, we don't have so many as they do over at the treasury. I believe there are more ladies over there than men. And now I must go."

"A moment," said Mrs. Varney, coming forward with Thorne. "Do you gentlemen know each other?"

Captain Thorne shook his head and stepped forward, looking intently at the other.

"Let me have the pleasure of making you acquainted, then, Captain Thorne—Lieutenant Maxwell."

Thorne slowly inclined his head. Maxwell also bowed.

"I have not had the pleasure of meeting Captain Thorne before, although I have heard of him a great many times," he said courteously.

"Yes?" answered the other, who seemed to be a man of few words.

"In fact, captain, there is a gentleman in one of our offices who seems mighty anxious to pick a fight with you."

"Really!" exclaimed Captain Thorne, smiling somewhat sarcastically; "pick a fight with me! To what office do you refer, sir?"

"The war office, sir," said Lieutenant Maxwell, rather annoyed.

"Dear, dear!" continued Thorne urbanely; "I didn't suppose there was anybody in the war office who wanted to fight!"

"And why not, sir?" asked Lieutenant Maxwell haughtily, while Edith barely stifled a laugh, and her mother even smiled.

"Well, if he wanted to fight, he'd hardly be in an office at a time like this, would he?"

Captain Thorne's sarcasm seemed to perturb the youngster, but his good breeding got the better of his annoyance.

"I'd better not tell him that, captain," he said with a great effort at lightness; "he would certainly insist upon having you out."

"That would be too bad," said the captain. "It might interfere with his office hours and—"

"He doesn't believe it, Miss Varney," said Maxwell, turning to the younger woman, "but it is certainly true. I dare say you know the gentleman—"

"Please don't, lieutenant," interrupted Edith quickly. "I would rather not talk about it, if you please."

"Of course," said Maxwell. "I didn't know there was anything—"

"Yes," said Edith. "Let's talk about something else. You know there is always the weather to fall back on—"

"I should say so," laughed the lieutenant, "and mighty bad weather for us, too."

"Yes, isn't it?" They turned away, talking and laughing somewhat constrainedly, while Mrs. Varney picked up the note that was still lying on the table.

"From your note, I suppose you are leaving us immediately, Captain Thorne. Your orders have come?"

"Yes, Mrs. Varney," said the captain. "I am afraid this must be the last of my pleasant calls."

"Isn't it rather sudden? Are you quite well? It seems to me they ought to give you a little more time to recover."

"I have no doubt that I am or feel, much better than I look," said the captain, "and we have to be ready for anything, you know. I have been idle too long already."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Mrs. Varney. "Well, it has been a great pleasure to have you call upon us. When you are away we shall greatly miss your visits."

"Thank you; I shall never forget what they have been to me."

"Lieutenant Maxwell is going, mamma," said Edith.

"So soon! Please excuse me a moment, captain. I am very sorry you have to hurry away, lieutenant; we shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you again, if your duties permit."

"I shall certainly avail myself of your invitation, if you will allow me." He saluted Captain Thorne. "Good evening, sir."

"I am sorry." "Yes," said the girl. "I have a very little time to stay and—"

"Oh—not long?" asked Edith. "No, I am sorry to say."

"Well, do you know," she looked at him archly, "I believe you will have more time than you really think you have. It would be odd if it came out that way, wouldn't it?" she continued, as she played with the flower in her hand.

"Yes, but it won't come out that way," said Thorne, as he stepped closer to her.

"You don't know," she faltered, as Thorne drew the flower from her and took her hand in his. They stood there quiet a moment, and she did not draw her hand away. "Well, it makes no difference how soon you are going away; you can sit down in the meantime if you want to."

"It is hardly worth while," he said; "my time is so short."

"You would better," interrupted the girl; "I have a great many things to say to you."

"Have you?" he asked, sitting down on the little sofa by her side in compliance with her invitation.

"Yes."

"But I have only one thing to say to you—Miss Varney and—that is—"

Thorne took her other hand in both of his—"good-bye."

Very different words had trembled on his lips, as he knew and as the girl knew.

"But I don't really think you will have to say that, Captain Thorne," said Edith slowly.

"I know I will."

"Then," said Edith more softly, "it will be because you want to say it."

"No," said Thorne, resolutely and of his own motion releasing her hands, which she had allowed him to hold without remonstrance; "it will be because I must."

He rose to his feet and took up his hat from the table as if, the thing being settled, he had only to go. But the girl observed with secret joy that he made no other effort at departure.

"Oh, you think you must, do you, Captain Thorne?" said Edith, looking up at him mischievously. "You are a very wise person, but you don't know all that I know."

"I think that is more than likely, Miss Varney, but won't you tell me some of the things that you know that I don't, so that I can approach your knowledge in that respect?"

"I wouldn't mind telling you one thing, and that is that it is very wrong for you to think of leaving Richmond now."

"Oh, but you don't know."

"Well, what do you know?" asked Thorne curiously.

"Whatever you were going to say. Most likely it was that there's something or other I don't know about, but I do know this. You were sent here to recover, and you haven't nearly had enough time for it, yet."

"I do look as if a high wind would blow me away, don't I?" he laughed.

"No matter how you look, you ought not to go. You are just making fun of it, as you always do of everything. No matter, you can have all the fun you like, but the whole thing is settled; you are not going away at all, you are going to stay here," she concluded with most decided but winning emphasis.

"Oh, I'm not going? Well, that is quite a change for me," said Thorne composedly. He laid his hat back on the table and came closer to Edith. "Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me what I am going to do."

"I don't mind at all, and it is this. You see, I have been to see—I am almost afraid to tell you."

"Don't tell me," said the man with sudden seriousness, laying aside all his pleasantry, "because it can't be true. I have my orders, and I am leaving tonight."

"Where—to Petersburg—to the front?"

"We can't always tell where orders will take us," he said evasively, again sitting down beside her on the lounge. He could scarcely tear himself away from her, from the delicious yet painful emotion aroused by her presence.

He ought to have gone long since, yet he was with her, as he supposed, for the last time. Surely he might indulge himself a little. He loved her so desperately, so hopelessly.

"But listen," said the girl; "supposing there were other orders, orders from a higher authority, appointing you to duty here?"

"It would not make any difference." "You don't mean you would go in spite of them?" cried the girl in sudden alarm.

Thorne looked at her gravely and nodded his head.

"But if it were proved that your first orders were a mistake—"

She stretched out her hand toward him, which Thorne clasped closely again.

"But it wasn't a mistake, and I must go," he said slowly, rising to his feet once more, but still holding her hand.

"Is it something dangerous?" asked the girl apprehensively.

"Oh, well, enough to make it interesting."

But Edith did not respond to his well simulated humor. She drew her hand away, and Thorne fancied with a leap of his heart that she did it with reluctance. She began softly:

"Don't be angry with me if I ask you again about your orders. I must know."

"But why?" asked Thorne curiously. "No matter, tell me."

"I can't do that. I wish I could," he answered with a slight sigh.

"You needn't," said the girl triumphantly; "I do know."

The captain started and, in spite of his control, a look of dismay and apprehension flitted across his face as the girl went on:

"They're sending you on some mission where death is almost certain. They know you are fearless and will do anything. There is a chance for you to stay here, and be just as much use, and I am going to ask you to take it. It isn't your life alone—there are others to think of and—that's why I ask you. It may not sound well, but I ought not to—"

As she spoke she rose to her feet, confronting him, while she impulsively thrust out her hand toward him again. Once more he took that beloved hand in his own, holding it close against him.

"No," said the man at last, by the exercise of the most iron self-control and repression, "you shall not have this against me, too."

Edith drew closer to him, leaving her hand in his as she placed her other on his shoulder. She thought she knew what he would have said. And love gave her courage. The frankness of war was in the air. If this man left her now, she might never see him again. She was a woman, but she could not let him go without an effort.

"Against you? What against you? What do you mean?" she asked softly. The witchery of the hour was upon him, too, and the sweetness of her presence. He knew he had but to speak to receive his answer, to summon the fortress and receive the surrender. Her eyes dropped before his passionately searching look, her color came and went, her bosom rose and fell. She thought he must certainly hear the wild beating of her heart. He pressed her hands closely to his breast for a moment, but quickly pulled himself together again.

"I must go," he said hoarsely; "my business is—elsewhere. I ought never to have seen you or spoken to you, but I had to come to this house and you were here, and how could I help it? Oh—I couldn't for my whole—it's only you in this—"

He stopped and thrust her hands away from him blindly and turned away. As there was a God above him he would not do it. "Your mother—I would like to say good-bye to her."

"No, you are not going," cried the girl desperately, playing her last card. "Listen, they need you in Richmond; the president told me so himself—your orders are to stay here. You are to be given a special commission on the war department telegraph service, and you—"

"No, no, I won't take it—I can't take it, Miss Varney."

"Can't you do that much for me?" said the girl with winning sweetness, and again she put out her hands to him.

"It is for you that I will do nothing of the kind," he answered quickly; "if you ever think of me again afterward, when I am gone, remember that I refused."

"But you can't refuse; it is the president's desire, it is his order, you have got to obey. Wait a moment, I left it upstairs. I will fetch it for you and you will see."

She turned toward the door.

"No," said Thorne, "don't get it, I won't look at it."

"But you must see what it is. It puts you at the head of everything. You have entire control. When you see it I know you will accept it. Please wait."

"No, Miss Varney, I can't—"

WAR OMEN WHEN WHALE COMES

So Think the Superstitious, Who Watch Over the Delaware

FISHERMAN TELLS STORY

Big Fish Appeared as Precursor of Carnage in 1811 and Again in 1860—Resembles Hull of Upturned Vessel.

Chester.—Superstitious people of this city believe that the whale which was recently seen in Delaware Bay is a precursor of war. They refer to past omens of a similar character, reciting that the whale which came up the Delaware River in 1812, and that in 1860, one year before the outbreak of the civil war, a whale came up these waters to Philadelphia. This later whale, Edward Culen, a veteran fisherman, of this city, avers he saw. He says:—"It was just his way. It was during the summer of 1860. Horace Davis and I were out in a boat fishing. It was a little dark, and we had a lantern. I was drawing in the net and Davis was banking it. All of a sudden Davis said:—"Ned, there's a vessel upside down out there." I looked and saw the thing that had the appearance of the hull of a craft upset. "See how swift the tide speeds by it," said Davis. We'd got pretty close to it then and I lifted the lantern to take a good look. Just then there was a terrible splash and the water went clear up into the air out of that thing, just as though a powder magazine had burst. I dropped the lantern, and Davis and I grabbed the oars and we didn't stop until we got ashore. There wasn't any steamboat on the river that could have beaten us that trip. When that whale was caught up near Kensington she had fishermen's nets around her to stock two or three ship stores. She had dragged them off the bottom of the Delaware as she crawled up toward Philadelphia."

Snake Drops on Table.

Altoona.—Dropping from a maple tree to the table at which John Schenk, the Altoona boniface, was entertaining a few guests at his summer cottage at Wopononock on the mountain, a blacksnake broke up the feast and took away the appetites of some of the party. Because of the heat the table had been spread under the trees on the lawn, where it was cooler, and while the company was discussing the menu, the reptile, without warning, fell from an overhanging branch, struck the festive board and landed on a carpet that had been washed and spread out to dry. Up sprang the diners, and while the women fled to a place of safety, the men planned to dispatch the snake, which was four feet long; but Schenk refused to countenance the killing, saying that the blacksnake was man's friend, and would drive out rattlers and copperheads. It is supposed the reptile climbed the tree in search of young birds or birds' eggs.

Expert Athlete Drowns.

Kane.—Word was received from Renova announcing the death by drowning of Vincent J. Fitzpatrick, aged twenty-two years old, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Fitzpatrick, of this city. Fitzpatrick, who was a member of the Renova Baseball Club, was one of the best known all around athletes in this part of the country, and last year he was a member of the Bucknell University football team, playing half-back on that team. He also played on the St. Bonaventure College and Kane High School football teams. Fitzpatrick was bathing in the Susquehanna River with several others, when he was attacked by cramps and drowned.

Bear's Berry Tooth a Lure.

York.—Until the berry season comes to an end Howard Anderson, a Stewartstown sportsman and farmer, has little hope of seeing one of his three tame bears. He knows his pets weakness for this fruit. As for the neighborhood, it is not at all exercised, for the Anderson bears are as harmless as kittens. Last year this same bear made a similar escape, and for five weeks hid away in the woods and swamps about the Anderson farm, feasting to its heart's content of blackberries and huckleberries. When the berries were over the bear came home again.

Foreman Dies to Save Fifteen.

Sunbury.—To save the lives of fifteen men, Frank Allen, a bridge foreman, took hold of a live electric wire carrying 2,000 volts, and died instantly. The carrying power to a crane had parted, and Allen saw that to prevent his men being shocked to death he must grab it. This he did without a moment's hesitation.

Arrest Wrong Warty Man.

Lancaster.—Wesley Smith, arrested in Atlantic City for holding up and robbing Mrs. Addison Benedict, will be able to prove his innocence. The authorities arrested in this city William H. Stewart as the highwayman, and Mrs. Benedict positively identified him as the man who, at the point of a gun, compelled her to hand over her money. In describing the robber to the police on the day of the occurrence she said the man had numerous warts on his hand. With that clew the officers found Stewart.

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COOK WHO WORKS BY GUESS

She is a Genius, but is Not Often Found in These Decadent Days.

"I'd give a dollar," said the man who coddles his stomach, "to find a cook who doesn't measure. She would gladden my soul. The cook who does things by guess is a rare bird nowadays. She has genius, else she could not dispense with the cast-iron rules that regulate modern cook-

ery, and geniuses are seldom indigenous to the lathouse kitchen.

"But there used to be plenty of them. Why, I remember the time when half the kitchens in the land gloried in a guesswork cook. It did a fellow's eyes and his entire internal organization good to watch her. She would take a pinch of this, a handful of that, and a dash of something else, and mix them all together, and the result would be the most delectable tidbit that a fellow ever put in his mouth.

"Lord, Lord, but eating was a pleasure in those days. It isn't so now. In these whirlygig times everything has a machine-made taste. That's because the cooks measure so much. Instead of trusting to inspiration, as the heaven-born cook is bound to do, the kitchen queens of today measure even the salt they put in the porridge. No wonder such cookery lacks individuality, and is all on the same dead level of mediocrity. Merciful heaven, what ails those biscuit! They're as heavy as lead."

"Possibly the cook made a mistake," he said the man's wife. "I got a new cook yesterday—one that cooks by guess. I am afraid she didn't put enough baking powder in the biscuits."

One-Sided Conversation.

Bacon—"I've been up talking to your wife for about two hours. Egbert—"Talking to my wife for two hours? How did you say? "Oh, I said, 'How do you do?' and she said all the rest."