

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

The right wing of Sherman's army was only a few miles from Blue Rock, a mountain village in Georgia.

The simple villagers felt little alarm. Blue Rock was the point of no strategic importance to either the Federals or the Confederates.

One fine morning in the early spring John Dickinson started out from the little hamlet to visit his farm only a mile or two distant. Dickinson was a young man, but a chronic lameness had secured his exemption from military service and as he had a wife and two children entirely dependent upon him, he regarded his disability as a blessing.

Still, he was a strong Confederate, and on this particular morning, while he was limping slowly along the rough country road, he paused more than once to listen with a frowning face to the sullen boom of Sherman's gun, several miles away.

I am not able to do much fighting, he muttered, but if they come to Blue Rock and cut up any I'll kill some of them if I have to die for it!

He meant what he said. This quiet young farmer had plenty of grit when he was put to the test.

The walk tired him and he left the road and stretched himself on a grassy place under the shade of a sturdy old oak.

He threw himself on his back and closed his eyes for a moment. Then he looked up into the green foliage above him.

A queer expression flitted over his face, but his gaze remained fixed upon one point.

In a careless way he raised his hand to his face, and stroked his mustache. Then the hand wandered down over his vest toying with each button. At last it slipped downward to a hip pocket, and reappeared as quick as a flash of lightning, this time with a pistol aimed upward.

Now, you come down, said Dickinson gruffly.

Ha! ha! laughed some one up in the tree. You have found me, have you?

The laugh surprised and irritated Dickinson. His keen eyes had discovered a fellow with a blue uniform sitting on one of the topmost limbs of a tree. It had flashed into his head that it would be an easy matter to capture him, and march him into Blue Rock. And now the rascal was laughing at him!

You'll grin on the wrong side of your mouth pretty soon, said Dickinson. I mean business. Don't you know that you are my prisoner?

Well, no, was the cool reply, I hadn't thought of it in that light. In fact, I was under the impression that you were my prisoner, and I was wondering how to dispose of you.

Confound you! roared the young farmer. If you don't come down at once I'll shoot!

See here, my friend, answered the soldier, you don't understand the situation.

O, I don't! shouted Dickinson.

No, where are your eyes? Take a good look, but don't move.

Thus appealed to, Dickinson allowed his eyes to run over the soldier's entire figure. He gave a start of surprise. The Federal held in his right hand a revolver aimed at the man on the ground.

I have had you covered ever since you came here, said the man in the tree.

And what did you think of doing? asked Dickinson in a tantalizing way.

I am going to shoot if you try to get up, or if you cock your pistol, was the response; but I expect to persuade you to drop your weapon and go off to the top of that hill yonder.

You are a fool! shouted Dickinson. Don't you know that somebody from town will come along and help me capture you?

And don't you know, replied the other, that some of our cavalry are coming this way, and may be here any moment?

Dickinson studied the face above him. It was a dark, clear-cut, handsome face, very youthful and pleasant in its expression.

Why, you are a boy, ain't you? was his next question as he took in the little willowy form.

Never mind what I am; my captain is satisfied with me, and that is enough. You had better drop your pistol

and come down. I'll see that you are treated well.

"Thanks. Hadn't you better lay down your weapon and march over that hill, and go home to your wife and children, if you have any? I am not particularly anxious to have our boys come along and capture you."

The frank and fearless eyes looking into Dickinson's had a kind look, and the angry farmer found that his wrath was gradually melting. After all, he thought, there would be little glory in capturing this boy-soldier. And then the fellow's story might be true. If the Federals were coming in that direction it was time for good Confederates to lie out.

What are you doing here, anyhow? he asked.

I slipped in Blue Rock last night, was the answer, and some of your people chased me out. My horse was shot and I had to take to the woods. I climbed up here to be safe until our cavalry came along.

I'll tell you what I'd do, broke in Dickinson, I don't much want to take you prisoner, and I don't want to shoot you. On the other hand, I'll admit that I have no fancy for being shot myself. But I'm not going to throw down my pistol. I will get up and go to town and when your crowd comes, if it comes at all, you may expect a hot reception if you are not too many for us.

There was a pause for a moment, and then the soldier in the tree spoke.

All right, I'll trust you, he said. Go ahead and I'll take no advantage of you. But you may expect to see me in Blue Rock, before night.

We'll take care of Blue Rock, defiantly responded Dickinson. Well, I'm off. Good-bye!

And he rose to his feet, and walked off as briskly as he could. He scorned to look back. If the federal was mean enough to break his word and fire, it was all right. But his heart bumped against his ribs until he had placed 100 yards between him and the tree.

When the blue jackets swarmed into the village that afternoon the score or two of male inhabitants saw that resistance was useless against such a force.

The captain sent me to guard your property, said a soldier, as he paused in front of Dickinson's door.

I am obliged to him replied Dickinson but I don't see why.

The men went on duty, and the little family passed the night undisturbed, and with the feeling that they were securely protected.

The captain requests you to come to his head quarters.

This message made Dickinson a little nervous when it was delivered to him the next morning. His wife could not conceal her alarm.

There is nothing wrong, the messenger assured her. The captain merely desires to see your husband a moment.

There was nothing to do but to go. Dickinson quieted his wife, and proceeded to the dwelling indicated to him as the captain's headquarters.

Glad to see you, Mr. Dickinson, the captain remarked with a peculiar smile. My wife wishes to thank you for your courteous and sensible conduct yesterday.

Your wife exclaimed the farmer. And then he saw what had escaped his notice, that there was a lady in the room. A very charming little lady, Dickinson thought. She looked fresh and bright in her simple traveling dress, and her curly hair cut short like a boy's gave her a roughish look. The lady's face was strangely familiar, and when the astonished Confederate gazed into her eyes he recognized her.

You were the soldier in the tree he cried.

The same admitted the captain's wife with a laugh.

You see, exclaimed the captain, my wife would come down to see me in camp, and she would wear a soldier's uniform. She is a headstrong little thing, and I have to yield, but but after her adventure of yesterday I have persuaded her to return home.

War is a bad thing, my friend, if the ladies are to go soldiering.

By this time Dickinson felt perfectly at home. His hosts were in such a jolly, good humor that it was contagious and the visitor spent a delightful half hour.

The Federals did not hold Blue

Rock long. They moved off with the main body of the army but before they left the captain's adventurous wife had been shipped home by her husband.

Queer things happen in war times, was Dickinson's comment on the affair when he spoke of it afterward to his friends, and tell I you it is a wonder the captain's wife didn't capture me and masoch me off. She is a doisy, if there ever was one!—(Atlantic Constitution.)

A CIRCUS IN HIMSELF.

A middle-aged man, whose face bore the imprint of that great household virtue, patience, leading a little boy by the hand, elbowed his way through a crowd at a circus.

We'll sit here Jimmie, where we can see everything, said he. Now we are all right.

The boy gazed in astonishment at the vast crowd, remained silent for a few moments then said:

Papa, papa.

Well?

When will the showman come?

After a while.

Do them men ever there with the horns belong to the show?

Oh, yes.

An' does that man standin' there by that pole own the show?

No; that's a town marshal.

What's a town marshal?

A man that arrests people.

How arrests them?

Puts them in jail.

Will he put you in jail?

O, no.

Why?

Because I haven't done anything. How done anything?

Why I haven't been bad.

But you could knock him down if he tried to put you in jail, couldn't you?

I suppose so.

And then he'd let you alone, wouldn't he?

I think so.

The band struck up, and the performance began. The boy becoming all eyes for a time lost his tongue.

There's the clown said the father, but the next moment regretted having said anything, for the boy wanted to know what was a clown?

Why, he's the man that makes the people laugh.

Will he make you laugh?

Well, I think not.

Why?

Because I have seen him so often. Will he make me laugh?

I think so.

Why?

Hush, now, and look at the performance.

What's the performance?

The acting.

What's the acting?

What the actors do in the ring.

What's the ring?

That er—that round place out there. Look at the lady on the horse.

Does mamma ride that way?

Of course not. What do you mean? Last night when you came home, you told her every time, you stayed out late the got on a high horse.

I was joking.

What's joking?

For goodness sake, hush. See, all those people are looking at you.

What for?

O, I don't know.

Why?

Listen now. The clown's going to sing.

What for?

Hush!

Why?

If you don't hush I'll take you home.

A few moments of silence followed.

One of the clowns said something, the audience roared and the boy, turning to his father, asked why the people laughed.

Laughing at what the clown said.

What did he say?

I don't know.

What ma'e you laugh, then?

Hush!

Why! What is the man saying? Announcing the concert.

What's the concert?

A show.

This show?

No.

Another show?

Ah, bah.

Where?

Here.

Right now?

No.

When?

My gracious alive! if you don't hush I'll take you home. You are worse than the nettle rash!

What's the nettle rash?

It's—it's—oh, I don't know!

What made you say I am worse than it then?

Are you going to hush? glaring at the boy.

Yes, sir.

Well, see that you do, now.

After a short silence the boy broke out again concerning the man who sold song-books.

What does he want to sell them for?

For money.

To buy candy with?

Ab, ha.

Has he got any boys?

I don't know.

Why?

Great Caesar! Didn't I tell you to hush?

Who is Caesar?

A man. Hush!

A snowman?

Ab, ha, abstractedly.

Could he jump over a horse?

Yes, musingly.

Did you know him?

Ab, ha.

Did you ever see him?

Yes.

Does mamma know him?

Know who? arousing himself.

Caesar.

No, no. What are you talking about?

Do you like him?

Come on, now; we are going home.

What for?

The show is over.

Are you going to stay for the concert? some one asked.

Not if I can help it, the father replied.

Shortly afterward a perspiring man man, leading a hang-back boy, might have been seen walking across a lot.

The man sighed deeply, and the boy asked:

What made you do that?

JUST LIKE A STORY.

Oh! dear, and Bertha Manning threw down the paper she had been reading. Why cannot people write things as they are, not as they ought to be or as they would like to have them.

Nothing ever happens in the real world as it is pictured out in the paper-and-ink world. In that there are no lasting disappointments and no failures. The hard-hearted parents relent, the rich uncle dies, the lost letter, or ring, or bracelet, is always found; the needy hero begins life a poor clerk, without experience and in less than a year is rich and independent with an offer of a junior partner, ship and the hand of the daughter of the house in the near future.

The raw country heroine, either makes her appearance in the society of city's elite, which she takes by storm, or she becomes literary, writes some poem, or song or story, without preparation, education, or training, mind you and becomes famous in a night. If a heroine's lines are cast in unpleasant places, there is always a recompense, sure, swift certain. We have not found it so in the real world, Mable.

Perhaps because we were not heroines, Bertie, replied her sister.

Then let us become heroines as soon as possible, exclaimed Bertie. I do wish that once, just once, something could happen to us just like a story.

All I want is justice, a little of the poetic justice that is pictured out in the literature of the day. But there isn't any of it in the real world about us. Take your own case, she added, glancing over at her sister; see how you have worked and struggled to keep the home for us both—that noisy, stuffy school by day and your writing by night. Do I not know why your light burns so late? but poems are a drug in the market.

Five years since we wrote left orphans; you have done this, and to what end. You have supported us both, but your health and strength are broken; the mortgage which we have no means of paying falls due next week, and the fossilized old humbug who holds it, thinks to force you into a marriage with his undesirable self by taking away our home.

I have done some good work in these five years, Bertie.

It would have been just as good, Queen Mab, if you had received better pay for it. No, Mab, there is little of the recompense we read of comes

into real life. The real stories are the ones that do not end well, and editors will not take them.

Think of Aunt Max now. Was there ever a sweeter, purer, better, or more lovable woman in the world than Aunt Max? And just see what her life has been. She loved Gerald Harding, but because of a lost letter, or some such trifle, they parted, and he out of revenge, married that brainless flyaway, Bess Halton, and a sweet time he had of it, too. What a life she lead him, through her jealousy on account of his former attachment, until she took her two children and ran away, for no other reason that I could ever see but that she might follow us out West and annoy Aunt Max by her presence.

Hush, Bertie, she is dead!

And small loss, too, Mab. There don't look so horrified, Mable. I never could see why, just because a person has gone over beyond, they must be eulogized and praised, and counted faultless, when all their lives they had made people as miserable and unhappy as they could, and when, too, the best thing they ever did was to die, and they wouldn't have done that if the could have avoided it.

Then Gerald's death with that party of excursions almost the same day that she was killed in a railroad collision, leaving three children penniless orphans in the place where no one knew even the names of the little waifs.

Gerald's death was what we might call poetic justice, in one sense, Bertie. It enabled Aunt Max to take the children, with no fear that any one would think she did it to bring him back to her. She is poor, and obliged to work hard for their support, but caring for them has been such a comfort for her.

Poor mamma told me once that aunt had never been the same since she read his name among the killed in that terrible disaster.

How she must have loved him! she is not quite forty and her hair is white as snow. Dear Aunt Max! I wonder if she knows how near a saint she is. What a pathetic story her life would make.

Why don't you write it, Bertie? I am sure you could.

Not I. I'd do anything to help, or please you, Mab, but I can't do that. I couldn't write the unreal romances of the day, besides, I think it is downright wicked. I should write the bare facts, the naked truth; my stories would be just as it is in real life, and they wouldn't end well. No editor would accept them. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, even if the one in the hand be only a little bit of embroidery, very poorly paid for. Besides, Mable, your experience in that line is sufficient to defer me.

I have never written prose, you know, Bertie. My inclination does not run in that groove. But I shall give up writing. I must till I get stronger. It must be that or the school, and I dare not give up the school. I do hate to, do so Bertie, for it has been such a comfort to me.

Oh Mab, it makes me just wild, wild, to see you growing so thin and pale. I have been so little help to you too. It will be better for you to rest more; only for that I could not bear to let you give it up, even for a little while. It will not be for always I feel sure of that. You have an invisible demon that sits on your shoulder and goads you on.

Next morning when the girls met at the breakfast-table it was Bertie who was hollow-eyed.

Your light was out early last night, Queen Mab, I thought it would be. Your invisible demon perched upon my chair last night and tortured me into wakefulness. This is the result, and she laid a roll of manuscript in her sister's lap.

It proved to be a story, or sketch, rather, bearing the title "Saint Max." Mabel felt her eyes grow wet as she read the truthful and pathetic lines. The old familiar places rose before her mental vision, the eastern home that they had loved so well, for Bertie had poured all her homesick soul into those few paragraphs, describing the quiet village where Gerald Harding had first won the love of Saint Max.

Why don't you address the editor by name, Bertie asked Mabel, glancing at the envelope.

I don't know his name. I've never seen a copy of the magazine he publishes. It doesn't matter, Mab, he will

not accept it. It's a true story and does interest the readers of the

Never mind, Bertie, the week was out she began to hunt the postoffice. She came back with one of these excursions, but she found her whole form trembling with excitement.

Oh, Mab! she cried, throwing a check for one hundred dollars into her sister's lap. I've seen him, that editor, I mean; he came himself, right away. You never guess who he is! He said there was a reward of one hundred dollars offered some time ago for the very information I sent him in that sketch. He doesn't want to really print it because—because Saint Max is alive, and so is he. It is Gerald Harding himself; he wasn't killed with the excursionists, and he didn't know that his children were alive; he had advertised for them and offered a reward, but he could hear nothing, except that two children about the age of his, whose names could not be learned, were killed in that collision. He's real rich, too—for an editor—and he's gone right over to see Aunt Max now. Aren't you glad, Queen Mab and was there ever anything so strange in the whole wide world? He's coming here by and by to renew his acquaintance with you. Isn't it delightful? You see he recognized Aunt Max and all of us from the sketch, and knew at once that it must be true.

And something has happened to us just like a story, hasn't it, Bertie?

Wh! to be sure! Queen Mab! I hadn't thought of that at all!

LADY JURORS A CENTURY

HENCE.

First Lady Juror—There seems to be no doubt that the prisoner murdered his wife.

Second Lady Juror—Yes isn't he handsome?

Third Lady Juror—The poor fellow hasn't had a single bouquet sent to him to-day.

Fourth Lady Juror—But you know the ladies weren't sure he was guilty.

Fifth Lady Juror—Of course not; they didn't hear half the evidence.

Sixth Lady Juror—If we bring him guilty what will they do?

Seventh Lady Juror—Hang him. Chorus—Horror!

Eighth Lady Juror—Why not say the second degree?

Ninth Lady Juror—Then they'd imprison the poor man for life.

Chorus—Horror!

Tenth Lady Juror—It wont do to bring him guilty at all.

Eleventh Lady Juror—I'm afraid not.

Twelfth Lady Juror—Of course not. If he is locked up we can't marry him.—Omaha World.

The velocity of light has been determined by an arrangement adopted by Fizeau, consisting of a toothed wheel

which may be made to revolve with great rapidity. A ray of light is made to pass through one of the intervals between the teeth, and to fall upon a reflecting mirror placed at a distance in such a manner that when the wheel is at rest the ray will be reflected back through the same interval.

A MANAGER who long had the charge of the horses of a street railroad, found the best ration to consist of equal quantities of bran and cornmeal, together with equal weights of hay and straw, cut and thoroughly moistened. This may be well to remember and act upon by all farmers and others who have plenty of straw, which is worth a great deal more if kept bright and dry under shelter, than if half rotten and weather beaten out doors.

Ivory scales, padlock knives, and so on, may be cleaned by scrubbing them with a soft tooth brush, soap and tepid water; then dry the ivory and brush well, dip the latter in alcohol and polish the ivory until it has regained its former sheen. If the water gives the ivory a yellowish tint dry the object in a heated place. If age has yellowed it place the object under a bell jar with a vessel containing lime and muriatic acid, and set the whole in the sunshine.

A WAGON of one part of nitric acid in ten parts of water will, it is said, impart a stain resembling mahogany to pine wood that does not contain much resin. When the wood is thoroughly dry shellac varnish will impart a fine finish to the surface. A piece of carmine or lake will produce a rosewood finish. A turpentine extract of alkanet root produces a beautiful stain which admits of French polishing. Asphaltum, thinned with turpentine, makes an excellent mahogany color on new wood.

Professor Thompson, in a recent lecture, informed his audience that the magnetic pole is now near Boothia Felix, or more than 1,000 miles west of the geographical pole. In 1857 the magnetic pole was due north, it having been eastward before that year. Then it began to move westward, until 1816, when the maximum was reached. This is now being steadily diminished, and in 1878 it will again point due north. Professor Thompson says that the changes which will have been observed not only in the direction, but in the strength of the earth's magnetism, will show that the same causes which originally magnetized the earth are still at work.