

For The Bloomfield Times.

The Stolen Meeting

A Story of the Rebellion.

BY W. A. HOLLAND.

THE sun had just disappeared beneath the horizon, and gray twilight was beginning to steal over the landscape, when the gateway of a spacious garden, attached to one of those manorial-like residences, was cautiously pushed open and two beautiful women appeared outside, who seemed to be waiting for the appearance of a third person.

"You must not let your courage fail, Annie," said a sweet voice, that tried to be heroic, "you must not fail, you are in the path of duty, then why should you tremble?"

But the companion of the fair speaker hesitated, and drew back.

"Oh! what will father say?" was her reply. "I have never disobeyed him before, and he has always been so kind to me."

"What will Raymond say, if you do not meet him? He is going to join the army to-morrow; he is about to risk his life in a noble cause—the defence of our glorious union—will you then refuse to say farewell to him?"

As she spoke, she dragged her companion forward beyond the gateway, and at the same instant, a gentleman attired in plain citizens' clothes, and carrying a cloak on his arm to be used if necessary as a disguise, emerged from the shadow of the wall.

"There, I'll keep watch here," said the first speaker, pushing her timid, blushing friend toward the eager cavalier, "and do not be ashamed to tell Captain Raymond how much you love him."

Annie was in her eighteenth year.—Though slight and fragile, her stature was sufficiently tall, and her form of beautiful proportions. She had an exquisite complexion, wavering between fair and dark, sometimes one and sometimes the other; and features not susceptible of classification, but ever varying with her emotions and fully expressing them.

Hitherto her life had been an unbroken dream of pleasure, with the exception of the agony of the loss of her beloved mother. But death being one of the inevitable instances of this life, nature provides a solace for the pang. Although we must die, it is natural to mourn the departed; but nature enables us to bear the loss, and provides other objects to occupy our affection, and then in our turn we shall be loved and lost, mourned and forgotten.

Annie was the only daughter of Judge Mitchell, who after having been successively elected to many important offices, which he had filled with honor, had retired a few years before the rebellion, to his splendid country seat in the vicinity of Warrenton Junction, Virginia.

Like many of the wealthy officials he had leaned strongly to the cause of the South, and hence had banished his daughter's favorite suitor from the house, though, previous to trouble between the North and South, no person had been a more welcome guest there, than Charles Raymond, a brilliant and rising lawyer and the orphan son of Judge Mitchell's early friend and patron.

"The traitor," he exclaimed, angrily, when he announced this to Annie, "I might have forgiven him, if he had stood neutral, though it is a shame in one whose ancestors were all of southern birth, to be even that; but to take sides with the abolitionists, to accept a commission in their beggarly army, I'll never forgive him as long as I live."

"You'll live to see him hung," he continued, indifferent to Annie's tears, for the Judge was one of those who had little care for the feelings of others, when he was angry. "Many a better man, and less of a traitor, has suffered death."

Thus forbidden to visit his lady love, Raymond, or Captain Raymond, as we ought to call him, had solicited a parting interview with Annie, before he joined his regiment, a request which she had delayed to grant, for, brought up as she had been, it seemed both unmanly in itself and ungrateful toward her father.

Not that she did not love Raymond. No pledges, indeed, had ever been exchanged between them; but they had been so much together, and their tastes were so similar, that she could not help but love him; though she was ignorant of the state of her heart till her father had banished Raymond. This action first revealed to her how much her happiness depended on him but in spite of all this, her strict ideas of duty might have prevented her granting the interview so eagerly solicited, had it not been for her friend and schoolmate, Virginia Rivers, who plead the lover's cause with an eloquence that found only too faithful an ally in the heart of her listener.

Annie had resolved, however, to make no promise to her lover. But when she heard his rich manly voice in supplication, when she reflected on all the perils before him, she suffered him to put a ring on her finger and murmured a half audible response to his eager vows.

"In life or death," he said, earnestly, when Virginia beckoned that some one was approaching. "I will be true to you Annie, you will hear me slandered; I may even fall on the scaffold, but never will I be false to you, or do a deed unworthy of your love. I know your sympathies are secretly with the "Old Flag;" pray for it and me, dearest."

A weeping promise that she would; a hastily snatched kiss; and then they parted, how and when, if ever, to meet again, they knew not.

The next day Raymond reached the city of Washington, and entered upon the duties of his office, with a full determination to do all in his power to restore our glorious Union, to its former quiet. How well he kept his resolve, his advancement will show.

It was the night after the battle of Bull Run, (July 21st, 1861,) that fiercely contested struggle, which at first, seemed so disastrous to the union cause. McDowell had been defeated; the confederates had forced open a road to the Federal Capitol, and the union cause seemed lost.

All day, Annie had heard the thunder of the cannon, for her father's mansion was but a few miles from the battle field, and had shuddered to think of the wounded and suffering soldiers; the hundreds of souls called to their last account; the wives made widows; the children orphaned.—Even at night, and when she had retired to her chamber, her thoughts were so engrossed by sad reflections, that she could not sleep.

Suddenly there came a low knock at the door, and the voice of her maid, tremulous with excitement, solicited admission.

"What is it," said Annie, with alarm, as she saw the pale and agitated face of the servant.

"Oh! Miss," cried the girl, "only to think, they've got poor, dear Capt. Raymond and are going to hang him."

Annie felt the room spin around her, but had still sufficient self-control to grasp a chair-back for support. Her maid seeing her mistress's agitation, stopped abruptly.

"I am better now," said Annie, in a moment, recovering herself, "go on."

The girl frightened, and already regretting that she had told her mistress, would have declined, but Annie insisted on knowing all had preserved her from fainting; for she was never timid in great emergencies, however much so under ordinary circumstances.

It seemed that the confederate troops had appropriated whatever convenient quarters they could find, and as the Mitchell mansion lay directly on the road to Richmond, a large party of officers and men had arrived there after the battle was over. The officers were now being entertained by the Judge, while the soldiers were distributed in the barns and outhouses.

"They've got ever so many prisoners," concluded the girl, "all of whom are common soldiers, except one, and he's Capt. Raymond, I'm sure. They've put him away from the rest of the prisoners, in the little room over the library, and posted a soldier to keep guard there. I'm sure from all this, that they're going to hang him, as master always said they would."

Annie thought so too, she was aware that the confederate leaders had not yet ventured to execute prisoners of war, but she feared, that after this signal victory, they would change their policy, for they regarded every union soldier, she well knew, as deserving death. Her interest in the prisoner assisted in bringing her to this conclusion. For some minutes she remained, trying to collect her faculties, and pressing her hand on her heart to still its beating, but she was interrupted, at last, by the maid.

"Oh! dear, what shall we do?" cried the maid, wringing her hands, "such a dear, sweet gentleman, and to be hung at our own door too. Won't master beg his life of the soldiers?"

"Bridget," said Annie trying to speak without perceptible emotion, "my father will never do that, and the Captain will die if we don't find some way to let him escape. Listen to me now, and remember every word I say! There, don't speak, but attend—"

"Oh! yes, Miss, I'll do anything to save such a handsome—"

"Never mind that, but listen and obey. Go straight down stairs and see that the soldiers in the kitchen are well served, and give them as much ale, or even stronger drink, as they want. You understand me. At twelve o'clock to-night the sentry at the door of the captain's room will be relieved, and I wish the one who succeeds him to be as sleepy as possible. There's a little back staircase, you know, leading into the library, through that room. By that staircase we can set the captain free, if the sentinel is too sleepy to hear us."

The girl was quick-witted and comprehended the whole plan at once. She played her part well also. About one o'clock when the whole house was, at last still, she accompanied her mistress to the room where the prisoner was confined, bearing a civilian's dress in which to disguise him. The light footsteps of Annie awoke the sleeper, for he slumbered like a soldier, who is ever ready to take alarm. A few hurried words explained to Annie, that he

had been struck down by a spent ball, and when his reason returned, he was a prisoner. Annie then withdrew. In a few moments, he appeared outside; a close embrace and a hasty farewell ensued, and then he was gone.

The next morning, when the escape of the prisoner was discovered, the confederate officers were highly excited, and but for the known loyalty of Judge Mitchell would have suspected him as an accessory. That some one, within the house had released Capt. Raymond was incontestable. But Annie escaped suspicion.

Perhaps, however, her father was not without misgivings. But he kept his own counsel and Annie kept hers.

After the evacuation of Centreville and Bull Run, by the Confederate army in the spring of 1862, Judge Mitchell not liking the appearance of things, and not deeming it safe to remain at home, followed the army to Richmond, where he accepted an office in the confederate war department, and where he remained until all hopes of the confederacy were gone, and indeed, until a few hours previous to the entrance of the Union troops, when he returned to his home.

Annie although requested to accompany her father, plead to be left at home to protect, if possible, the property; assuring her father that she would be perfectly safe, and well did she perform her duty. When there were confederate troops in the vicinity, who were likely to give her trouble, she had only to inform them of the position her father held in the confederacy to secure protection for all her property from any damage from them. If on the other hand, the Union soldiers were there, she had only to produce a certificate, testifying to her union sentiments. This certificate was procured for her by Captain Raymond, and signed by President Lincoln, and was put into her hand by Gen. Geo. A. McCall, of the Penn'a. Reserve Vol. Corps, who were among the first troops to visit that neighborhood after the evacuation of the confederates. She also received at the same time, and by the same gentleman, a note from Capt. Raymond, informing her, that his regiment was ordered to the south western department. It is only necessary to say that he remained in that department until Gen. Sherman, started by his "March to the sea," when he was ordered to return to Washington City.

Notice having been taken of his many gallant actions and noble bearing, he had been promoted to the rank of colonel, a position that had been well earned.

It was the night after the surrender of the confederate Gen. Lee, which event closed the war; that Annie Mitchell again stole out into the garden at twilight. A note had reached her that day from her lover, apprising her of the peril that threatened her father, and concluding with the assertion that she only could avert the coming ruin, but that she could do it.

"And now, dearest," said the union officer, when the first moments of the meeting was over, "I must listen to tell you what I have to say, for time is precious, and should your father discover us, all will be lost. If you would save your parent from penury, perhaps imprisonment, you must become my wife, to-night. Nay! do not start. It is from no selfish motive that I ask this. But though my influence with those in power is great, it is insufficient to avert the confiscation of your father's property, unless I can present myself as the husband of his daughter. We must act promptly too, for if your father should suspect our purpose, his pride, to say nothing of his prejudices, will induce him to forbid the marriage. I have brought the chaplain of my regiment along, and he is prepared to unite us immediately. He awaits us in yonder farm house. Half an hour will suffice for the ceremony, after which I will bring you back here, in time to prevent your absence being noticed. I will then mount and hasten to headquarters, when I will make the granting an amnesty to your father a personal affair, and I am sure under such circumstances, I will succeed in carrying my point."

Annie hesitated, but only for a moment. She thought her father in eminent peril, and the conviction that this was the only feasible plan to save him, overcome those considerations of maidenly reserve, and that strict regard for duty, in which young ladies of this day are educated. She went back for her maid, for she felt she could not go through this trying ordeal without some female companion, and then silently placing her arm in that of her lover, was soon at the farm house. Little did her father think, when he complimented her an hour after, on her brilliant color, what it was that called such blushes to her cheek and such consciousness to her whole manner.

Everything had turned out as Col. Raymond had prognosticated. The Judge stormed when he first heard of the marriage. But though Annie, even amid his reproaches, was too generous to tell why she had finally disobeyed him, his own sagacity in his cooler hours, pointed out to him the truth, and he forgave both her and her husband, secretly ashamed of his former conduct.

He still strictly adheres to the cause of the south, but always keeps his own coun-

sel, and when a short time since, a younger Raymond hurried for Grant—in his own house—he said nothing.

Annie and her husband often speak of the first stolen meeting at the beginning of the rebellion. "If you had not met me," the latter once said, "how different would have been the fate of all, but thank God we are happy."

How to get Along.

Do not stop to tell stories in business hours.

If you have a place of business, be found there when wanted.

No man can get rich by sitting round stores and saloons.

Never "fool" in business matters.

Have order, system, regularity, liberality and promptness.

Do not meddle with business you know nothing of.

Never buy an article you do not need simply because it is cheap, and the man who sells it will take it out in trade.

Trade in money.

Strive to avoid hard words and personalities.

Do not kick every stone in the path.—More miles can be made in a day by going steadily on than stopping.

Pay as you go.

A man of honor respects his word as his bond.

Alc, but never beg.

Help others when you can, but never give what you cannot afford simply because it is fashionable.

Learn to say "no." No necessity of snapping it out in dog fashion, but say it firmly and respectfully.

Have but few confidants; the fewer the better.

Use your own brains rather than those of others.

Learn to think and act for yourself.

Be vigilant.

Keep ahead rather than behind the times.

Reader, cut this out, and if there be folly in the argument let us know.

Puzzling People.

To show how easily the mind is puzzled by any complication of a statement, we once propounded the following to a company of gentlemen: A owes B \$500 and admits the debt. A's father dies intestate, and B's father takes the benefit of the bankrupt act. Does this discharge A's obligation to B? After no little consideration of the problem several of the company decided that it did! It seemed to the friend with whom we were arguing perfectly easy for any intelligent person to throw out all the latter items of the statement as having no possible connection with the first, but the test established the point for which we were contending, that this could only be done by a mental effort to which some men were not equal at the moment the question was asked. If we had not witnessed such exhibitions we should suppose that a question proposed by our friend at Morris, New York, was designed as a quiz. He supposes the case of a hunter pursuing a squirrel which dodges around a tree, and as the man with the gun follows around to get a shot at the nimble game he is seeking keeps always exactly on the opposite side of the trunk. Now comes the all-important query: Has the gunner, having thus gone around the tree, also gone around the squirrel? The town from which the question comes seems to have been divided as to the true answer.

A crime astonishing in its details, is reported to have recently been committed in Ireland. A goods train starting out from Limerick just before dusk, had proceeded but a few miles when it came to a full stop. The astonished guard jumped from his box and ran up to the engine, but when he arrived neither fireman nor driver were visible. The light of his lamp, however, revealed traces of blood and hair. He at once searched the line on the back track, and thus discovered first the driver's hat, and next his dead body lying on the sleepers. Taking the train on to the next station he reported the facts to the police, who set out on foot in search of the missing fireman. They found him the next morning in a cabin not far from the railway, and got possession of his clothes, which were stained with evidence of guilt. Overcome by his sudden discovery he referred the death of his comrade to a sudden quarrel caused by the driver's violence towards him. Justice may find out the facts; but, however the final strife arose, the incident is one that fastens upon the imagination, and must take its place among the most remarkable class of crimes. Here, on an engine speeding through the darkness, two men suddenly fall into deadly feud, and one, quickly murdered, is cast forth upon the rails, while the other stopping the train, flies for his life.

A witness, in describing a certain event, said, "The person I saw at the head of the stairs was a man with one eye named Wilkins."

"What was the name of his other eye," spitefully asked the opposing counsel.

The witness was disgusted with the levity of the audience.

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