

Both Sides OF The Shield

By Major ARCHIBALD W. BUTT, One of the Heroes of the Titanic and President Taft's Military Aid.

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SYNOPSIS

Palmer, a Boston newspaper man, is sent to Georgia to report social and industrial conditions in a series of letters to his paper. Colonel Turpin, a southerner, thinks Palmer is a lawyer and has come to foreclose the Turpin plantation's mortgage.

Palmer undecives him, and the colonel, thinking that Palmer is a kinsman, invites him to be his guest at the Pines. Palmer meets Ellen and Bud Turpin and is hospitably received.

He becomes interested in Ellen and learns that the Turpin home is in grave peril through lack of funds. He wants to confess that he is not really a kinsman, but fails to do so.

Squire Hawkins, an elderly man, is courting Ellen. A party is planned in honor of Palmer, who writes his impressions of the place for his paper.

Ellen wears an old brocade gown at the party, and Palmer falls in love with her. Ellen and her friends take him to the wishing stone.

"You are my queen tonight," Palmer tells her, but she will not permit him to avow his love. He fears she intends marrying the squire to save the old home.

Ellen thinks Palmer has ridiculed her and her family in one of his newspaper articles and commands him to leave her and never return.

Palmer secretly acquires the Turpin mortgage to protect the place for Ellen, then volunteers for service in the war against Spain.

He becomes ill in camp, and Ellen forgives and nurses him. They become reconciled, and there is a wedding in prospect.

"Mr. Palmer, let me present you to my wife, Mrs. Turpin; to my daughter, Ellen, and to my son, Howell Cobb, whom I hope you will soon address as Bud. Ellen, my dear, bid our guest, Mr. Palmer, welcome, for he is a kinsman of my old friends the Palmers of Kentucky, of whom you have so often heard me speak."

"Any friend whom my father brings to us is welcome, Mr. Palmer, but we make you doubly welcome on account of the ties which bind our house to yours."

She extended her hand, which I took and for the first time looked into that frank, open face. I did not think her beautiful then, but I was unprepared for the subtle ease and grace of manner and the exquisite poise of her head and the patrician face that was turned to me without any sign of embarrassment whatever. Her eyes were large and brown and her hands small and white. These were the only things about her that sank them into my memory.

"Mr. Palmer, father has taken us



"Mr. Palmer, let me present you to my daughter, Ellen."

somewhat by surprise, and you must excuse many things, but we make you right welcome, and when you get tired of playing billiards with Ellen and talking politics with father I have a good dog and gun at your disposal." The young man who was addressing me was tall and big, and when I had first entered I had mistaken him for a lubberly farm hand, but here he was, making me welcome with the ease of a courtier. Mrs. Turpin was a small, delicate looking woman, but was gowned in a faded royal purple velvet, evidently the remnant of an anterior date. "You young people can make plans at the table. In the meantime Ellen's roast is getting cold," said the colonel. Then I remembered about the cooking and thought for a moment

what a sacrifice it would be to devour anything prepared by those lovely hands, but a sudden convulsive pang of hunger banished my sentimental thought, and I offered my arm gladly to Mrs. Turpin, while she led the way to the dining room. It was, in fact, an immense hall, wainscoted with oak, but the walls above the paneling were stained and, as far as I could see, even moldy. It was a gloomy looking place, but the table was made bright and cheerful by two big candlesticks. On the table was a profusion of dishes, some silver, others of rare old china, and, as I saw later, there was hardly one of the latter which was not broken or chipped, but each steamed with some savory vegetable or meat, and I soon fell in the way of handing plates around the table and helping others from the dishes in front of or near me, just as we were wont to do in the railroad eating houses in New England when I was a boy. The conversation was easy and homelike, and I saw at once that I was not looked upon as a stranger. No questions were asked me about myself, for which I was thankful, and I soon saw, too, that the colonel did not intend to relate the details of our meeting that morning or to account to the other members of the family for his sudden impulse to invite me to become a guest at the Pines. So, as if by mutual consent, we refrained from making any reference to the matter, and I determined to leave it to the colonel to make any explanations which he might think to be best.

CHAPTER III.

"Waiting For a Prince to Come." THE colonel told Miss Ellen what the girls had said about Jim, at which she laughed heartily, but grew very red and showed some annoyance when he related what they had said about choosing a farm in the country and especially when reference was made to Squire Hawkins. I shall never forget how my plate looked after it had gone around the table. It had left my table empty and had come back plied to the brim with every sort of vegetable on the table. Miss Ellen laughed when I confessed that I did not know how to eat rice, nor would she rest content until she had taken my plate and arranged it according to the manner of eating rice in that section. She covered it with butter and sprinkled a little salt on it and, handing it back to me, bade me eat it, telling me that it was a part of my education. She laughed again when I wanted to put pepper on it, but she would let her father put a little dish gravy over it if it were not palatable. I ate it, not because I liked it then, for I would have eaten so much sawdust had she told me it was good and asked me to do so.

Every now and then, after I had swallowed some rice, I would look up to find her eyes fixed roughly on me, and then we would both laugh. She seemed to relish the idea that I did not like the rice and that I was eating it because she had fixed it and told me to do so. I made this fact very plain to her by the faces I would make in swallowing it. She confessed afterward to a little malice in forcing me to eat it, and later, when I really began to like it, she would often say, "Will you have your rice with cream and sugar on it or a little pepper, Mr. Palmer?"

After dinner we went on the porch, where Bud brought us pipes. "I hope you like the pipe," he said as he handed me an old briar root. "We have given up cigars lately—on account of the tariff," he added with a big, good natured laugh. I said I did; that it was my chiefest luxury in my university days and I still preferred it to cigars. Colonel Turpin said that if I did not object to music Ellen would play us something; that she always did when he took his after dinner smoke. I said that I could not imagine greater luxury, and I leaned back prepared to undergo any amount of torture and outrage to my artistic nature, for I knew something of music, as my father had been a splendid performer on the piano and had given me the benefit of his knowledge. Instead of hymns and waltzes, however, there floated through the window to us the sweetest notes I seemed ever to have heard. I sat dreamily thinking of this lovely girl and her odd surroundings when she appeared at the window and asked if there was anything that I liked especially.

"I do not know if you care for Chopin," she said. "Father does not know it is Chopin, but it is the music he likes, and so I always play some of the nocturnes for him."

"The truth is, Miss Turpin," I said. "I did not think of what you were playing, but was merely feeling the effect of the music. Your playing seemed to me to be a part of the scene out here, as if it were an accompaniment to the moon in its wanderings or to the stars in the silent watches."

My speech sounded like flattery, and I blushed as the thought came to me. "I hope you will forgive my praise if it seemed extravagant," I said, "but I only said what was in my heart without reflecting that you might take it for flattery." I had been accustomed to pay compliments at will and sometimes, I fear, was given to flattery, but I would not have had this young girl think me guilty of such ill breeding for anything in the world. "If that is the way you feel," she answered sweetly, "I will play something for you and trust to pleasing father," and, going back to the piano, she played something—I do not know what. Bud said he had never heard her play it before, and, though I asked her often after that to play it for me again, I never heard it, yet the strains even now go through my head when I sit in

the moonlight or lie awake at night thinking of Ellen. She disappeared after awhile to clear the table and wash the dishes, I thought, with some resentment. Colonel Turpin talked politics, and I soon learned that he was decided in his views, though somewhat mixed in his politics. I found out that he was addicted to the habit of writing "pieces" for the papers, but never under his own name. He chose rather such noms de plume as "Vox Populi," "Citizen" and sometimes "Patriot." He did not believe that writing was the profession of a gentleman unless one could hide one's identity. Yet he felt that the public should be educated by this means. He was a Democrat, but believed in a high protective tariff. He disclaimed being a jingo, but thought it the duty of the government to avenge the wrongs of any people persecuted by a foreign power. And so the night wore on and the moon rose higher in the heavens. I heard Bud and the colonel discuss the work on the farm and judged that the former and two or three negroes did it all save in the picking season.

There was a contradiction about this strange household which was perplexing to me. Where had Miss Ellen mastered the piano, and why was Bud, with the apparent education of a cultured gentleman, wearing jeans and doing the plow work in the fields? I had begun to weary of conjecture when Miss Ellen returned and offered to show me the view from the cupola. It was a weary climb to the top of that old house, but one felt repaid on reaching there as the panorama unfolded itself in the moonlight. The moon was but a fortnight old, and the night was cloudless. Miss Ellen pointed out to me the field where the army of Sherman had camped on its famous march to the sea, but had not a word of criticism to make of that great general. She told me of the strong young manhood that was developing to regenerate the land and seemed to think the freedom of the slaves a blessing to both people. She promised to take me to the negro settlement some day and show me how they lived. She had a Sunday school there of colored girls, "for," she said, "it is going to be through the mothers of the colored race that we will some day reach it and elevate it to what is good and moral." I stood spellbound, as it were, by her earnestness and faith, and all my preconceived opinions began to fall away under the influence of this little brown eyed girl in aingham gown.

That night after I retired to my room the instincts of the newspaper man, which had lain dormant since arriving at the Pines, began to stir, and I could not help thinking what a picture this household would make if held up before a Boston audience. But to turn these kindly people into an object lesson would be the basest ingratitude. Yet put this idea from me as I would, it would recur to me during the night, and scene after scene, with Ellen and Bud always in the foreground, kept shifting themselves across the mental canvas, and argue as I would that to make use of this homely life with its poverty and pride, its dignified endurance of changed conditions, as the subject of a news letter would be an ill return for the hospitality I had received, yet I could not put aside the longing to pen the picture as I saw it and to paint it boldly, in order that others might see it in the same light as it had appealed to me.

The next morning I was up early, the sun, in fact, being only an hour ahead of me. Thinking it would be an excellent chance to see something of the place and study its character more in detail, for I had become deeply interested in everything connected with the Pines, I dressed hastily and started for a brisk walk. As I was making the half circuit of the house by way of exploration I came upon Miss Ellen, carrying an armful of kindling wood. "Why, Miss Turpin," I cried, "I had no idea of finding you up at this hour."

"You forget the dual character I play," she laughed. "I am not early, however, for it is late. But you are responsible for it, as you demoralized the household last night in encouraging father to discuss politics. Doubtless you saw all his fallacies, but was kind enough not to point them out to him."

I had been much entertained, I said, though his politics appeared to be somewhat mixed and his ideas were quite different from those I had expected to hear him express. "Yes," she answered; "he is half Democrat and half Republican, with a dash here and there of populism, I fear, but it makes him very angry to tell him so, as he thinks himself a hidebound Democrat. He can never forget that Henry Clay believed in a protective tariff. I think, next to General Oglethorpe, he admires the Kentuckian more than any of our historical characters. But I must not allow myself to be dragged into political argument, for I see you are ready to take up the cudgel for Clay, no doubt, and since you have come bothering about so early you must make yourself useful." She then showed me the wood pile and told me to bring enough to the kitchen to last two full days. "Miss Turpin," I said a little later as I entered the kitchen with my arms loaded down with short oak logs, "is it really necessary for you to do this work?" She looked with surprise at me, and I thought I saw a faint color come to the surface of her skin, but I could not tell, for she was lighting the fire. She saw that I was earnest in my question, and, still kneeling in front of the stove, she turned her frank face toward me and said: "I would resent the question, Mr. Palmer, did I not know that a kind heart prompted it. Yes," she added; "it is as necessary for me to do this as it is for Bud to plow. Of course

you must have heard from your relatives that the Turpins were greatly reduced. The house is heavily mortgaged, and to meet the interest we have to save in every legitimate way. Bud wants to hire a cook, but I will not listen to him. Father is determined that the moment he defaults on the interest that minute he will give up the Pines to the owners, for such they are who hold the mortgage on it. And, oh, Mr. Palmer, you don't know what it would mean to father and mother to move from here now. Besides, too, we would be no better off—even worse, I think, for we would have no place at all. Bud and I would be glad to go into the world and run our chances, but it can't be thought of, not now." She sighed and continued to make the fire.

By degrees I found out all there was to be known of the family, for there were no skeletons there. After the war it seems that Colonel Turpin had lived in a reckless sort of way, still keeping up the style of living he had grown accustomed to before the change of fortune in the southern planter's life. It was not until Bud had finished his college course and Miss Ellen had completed her studies that the real condition of the family became known. It was these two who



"Is it really necessary for you to do this work?"

had finally saved the plantation and home by pledging the interest on the mortgage. There was one more child, a boy of sixteen. The brother and sister were keeping him at college now and had planned that he should take the course in law after his academic studies were completed. Was there more courage in New England, I wondered, and was it not the blood of the cavalier that was telling now? She had given me her confidence without restraint, for she believed me then to be one with the Kentucky Palmers, and I, weak creature, dared not disabuse her mind for fear of losing that confidence and friendship which this fictitious relationship had inspired. "And now, Mr. Inquisitive," she said, "if you have finished your catechism, I will mix the batter and you will go for a long walk and get an appetite for breakfast."

(Continued in next Friday's paper.)

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