

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 undecodes 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.

We were a happy party as we lunched at the lodge. We barbecued our robins and some of the doves on little spits over a charcoal fire and stewed some with rice. We rode home early, however, more to see Miss Ellen, I think, than for any other reason. Each would have left all his game at her feet, but she would not have it so, but said she would take what I had killed in part payment for my board, which innocent remark brought a deep flush to my cheek, remembering, as I did, my unhappy mistake when I first arrived at the Pines. We described our sport, and she showed interest in everything we said and all we had done. Presently, looking at the sun, she exclaimed:

"Come, go home, you boys, for I am not going to ask you to stay to dinner, and be here early Thursday morning or I will not dance with any of you at the party." It took them but a few minutes to get their horses and disappear down the road.

"And you, sir," she said, turning to me as we lost sight of the others—"what are you going to do in the way of reparation now that you and your friends have put me back in my work?" "Set the table and bring the wood," I cried.

"Come, you shall set the table, for the wood has been brought in already." I followed to the dining room, where she threw me the tablecloth.

"Be careful," she laughed, "for it will not bear rough handling, though I dare say father would tell you that it has lasted since General Oglethorpe breakfasted off it and therefore will last after we are dead."

And so we set the table, Miss Ellen running to the kitchen every now and then and coming back to straighten the knives and forks, telling me that men were no earthly good about a house. Once our hands touched while placing the plates, and instantly, as if by instinct, we faced each other, and our eyes met. After that she kept on the other side of the table from me and later sent me upstairs to dress for dinner. When I came down there seemed to be a glow on her cheek, and in her hair there was stuck a wild rose which I had brought her from the woods.

The next three days all was bustle. The boys and girls came on Thursday, each bringing something in a basket. So much cooking I had never seen. One was put to beat the whites of the eggs and another the yolks. Some one was detailed to mix the cake and still another to watch it after it had been put into the oven. Margaret Robertson was given a squad and ordered to decorate the hall with greens. The jelly was made, and some one was sent with it to the springhouse, where it was left to cool and harden. Every now and then the colonel would appear at the kitchen door to tell us what times they used to have before the war when he was a boy.

That night when all were gone and Bud had fallen asleep in a chair Miss Ellen and I went on the lawn to look at the moon.

"Miss Ellen," I said, "I am happy here, and I hate to leave the Pines."

"Why do you talk of going?" she said, her voice subdued and her face turned away.

"Because I do not want to outlive my welcome," I said.

"No one does that at the Pines. As you see, there is not much to offer, but our friends are always welcome. Bud likes you, and father seems younger since you came."

"And you?" I said, drawing a step nearer to her.

"Oh, I!" She gave a little gasp and ended with a laugh. "It is as easy to cook for five as it is for four, so don't think of leaving on my account."

"That is what hurts," I said. "If you did not have to do this or if I had only known you long enough to tell you all that is in my mind," I ended bitterly.

She held up her finger and, laughing

in my face, said: "But you haven't, you know. So you must stay a long time and then come back some day and tell me," she added roguishly. "Never!" I said. "I will tell you before I leave if I have to stay the year out."

"Bravely spoken!" she cried. "And I will do what I can to make you take Christmas dinner with us. And now remember to be nice to all the homely girls you see tomorrow evening, and I promise not to get jealous even if you dance with the pretty ones as well."

Bud was still asleep when we got back to the house. We roused him, and all went quietly to bed. I did not sleep much that night, and somehow I did not think Miss Ellen did either, for I did not feel as lonely as when everybody was unconscious in that spacious mansion.

CHAPTER V. The Wishing Stone.

THE girls who had been invited to spend the night at the Pines came early the next day, and I went to the fields with Bud, for Miss Ellen told me that I would only be in the way if I stayed at home. I saw Bud at his plow and watched how cheerfully he did the work of a day laborer. I lit my pipe and walked several of the furrows with him, and then, heart sick at seeing this fine specimen of young manhood trudging wearily to and fro in the thankless soil, I wandered off in the woods to dream of Miss Ellen and weave schemes for the rest of the family when she would have become my wife. When? The question brought with it a flood of doubt, for, after all, would she give up the work she had undertaken, or would her pride allow her to accept any assistance for her family? I felt there were depths to her nature which I had not been able to sound in the short time I had been there.

For fear of wounding her I had remained silent, but I was now resolved to speak to her before leaving, and had I received orders that night to return to Boston I would have told her of my boundless love and asked her to become my wife. Still wavering between my inclination to declare my love and fear of being too precipitate, I returned to the Pines. I did not see her until dinner time, however, then only during a hasty meal, after which we assisted her to clear the table and place a number of small ones on the side porch for the party. We laid the collation for the evening's entertainment and then went to dress.

It was with some misgivings that I donned my evening suit, but on coming downstairs I found the colonel arrayed in one of an anterior date and Bud transformed from the plow hand of the morning in the suit he had worn at the time of his graduation. A number of young girls had arrived before Miss Ellen came down, and the men were assembled at the foot of the stairs as if waiting for her.

My heart seemed to stop beating as I saw her lithe and graceful figure, clad in an old brocade of her mother, coming toward me. Her hair was built high on her head, which seemed to change her whole appearance and made me start as I remembered my dream picture. The brocade was faded, but its gloss and richness remained. Her shoulders were bare, and her tilted chin gave her the air of some quaint old medieval picture come to life.

"Am I not in keeping with the house?" she said, interpreting my gaze.

"You are like a queen," I said. "Then you shall pay me court for this one night," she answered and held out her hand to me, which I took, and, with the manner of an old time southern gentleman, just as I had seen Colonel Turpin do, I bowed low and for a moment let my lips linger on the tips of her fingers.

"You have other courtiers," said one of several men who came forward to join us.

She held out her hand, and as she did so she looked at me for a second. She withdrew it gracefully and added, with a smile, "I was only admitting a new one," and then bade me follow her. She introduced me here and there and told me how many times I must dance with each. We went on the porch, and standing there, I was again struck with the resemblance to the lady in my dream.

"You are like the first part of my picture," I said softly.

"Then let me play it for this evening," she said. "And if you can imagine me a colonial dame you shall be a courtier from King George's court."

"Good," I cried, "if you will admit that I have come across the seas a-wooing!"

"As you will, my lord," spreading out her gown and courtesying. "But I will not be responsible for the consequences. So see to it that you play well your part, else I will send you to your king again."

After that I addressed her only as "most gracious lady" or "fair Mistress Ellen." I wooed her in the strange and quaint language of a hundred years ago. Sometimes she seemed startled at my earnestness, and when thinking my speech too fervent she would bid me go hence and add another wildflower to my already large bouquet. I would straightway return and tell her of the court life and weave amid my imagery an odd mixture of my New England home. Once, taking her hand for a moment and looking into her eyes, I said:

"Ah, Ellen, I love you well, and I would take you to a court in truth where you would find a royal welcome, and you would be a queen to every one who knew you, and I would so guard you that neither poverty nor sorrow should ever come near you or to those

you love. "I have naught to do with courts, my lord," she said with a certain pathos, and I knew she was thinking of her duty at the Pines. "So go back to your king, and, whether he be ambition or gold, or both, forget the simple colonial dame who more often plays the part of dairymaid. And now," she said, looking into my eyes and laughing, "go and seek out every maid over twenty-nine, and when you have led them all through the graceful minut come back to me."

And I would do as bid and dance some old time waltz with some lonely maid and then return to Miss Ellen's side only to be sent away again to some one who she noticed was not dancing. Finally the supper hour was announced, and I was made happy by Miss Ellen, who chose me as her partner for the march. Just as we were forming into line some one cried, "It is the hour for the wishing stone!" and then one and all, save myself, for I did not know what was meant by the wishing stone, joined in the clamor. Miss Ellen yielded at length, and, still holding my hand and bidding me give the other to the girl behind me, and so on down the line, we started out of the house through one of the deep, low cut windows. We circled the porch, crossed the gardens and passed down the terrace. The moonlight filtering through the trees glistened brightly on the colored frocks as we sped down the cedar lane.

At length we emerged on an open knoll in the center of which was an old stone sundial covered with ivy. We formed a circle round it, and Miss Ellen, letting go my hand, stood on a step by its side and, calling one after another by name, bade each lay his or her hand on the bare surface of the stone where the ivy had been cut away and to make a wish. One looking on might have thought we were a band of secret plotters taking the oath of allegiance on a tomb. It was no jesting matter, I could see, for each one in that gay party approached the stone in silence and reverence. The only sound that broke the stillness was that of Miss Ellen's voice as she called each name in turn. At last my name was



"It behooves you to approach it reverently."

called, a little more gently than the others, I thought, and Miss Ellen, seeing me approach, held up her hand and motioned me to stop.

"And now, Mr. Palmer," I heard her saying, "as a stranger to the wishing stone it behooves you to approach it reverently. There is no reason to tell the others this, for they know the legend and its secret charms, but to you, who know it not and who come as a stranger to it, tempt not its anger by deriding it, even in your thoughts, or its indifference by wishing for what is impossible. It was at this stone that my great-great-grandfather wished for his bride, and in less than a fortnight they were wed. He enjoined his sons to seek this spot before wooing the women of their choice, and it is a strange fatality that all our family who have not done so have gone to their graves beloved old bachelors and the women who have derided it as old maids. Of later years it has become the custom for lovesick youths and maidens in the town and country to seek it out and test its charms, and many a happy home owes more than we may imagine to the legend which clings about this ivy covered dial. The moment has arrived when you can test its power too."

Already I had become a firm believer in the wishing stone. Laying my hand on it and looking into the lovely eyes of Ellen, I made my wish and added a prayer that it might find favor with the fates. After I had finished we joined hands again and made three circles around the stone. Then all began to laugh, and some one started up the rollicking chorus of—

"'Tis love, 'tis love, 'Tis love that makes the world go round."

All joined in save Miss Ellen and me, for we strolled back somewhat slower than the others.

"What did you wish?" I asked, but she only shook her head and said she could not tell.

"I wished that you—" I got no further, for she gave a startled cry that checked me before I could finish the sentence.

"Don't—oh, don't!" she said. "You have already said too much. I ought to have told you not to tell your wish."

For if you do the wish become perverse and mock you. If you even hint of what you have asked in secret something will happen to mar its complete fulfillment. I am sorry you spoke about it at all," and I thought her face grew a little paler.

I dared not speak again, and we walked on in silence and joined the others in the old oaken dining room. Mr. Lamb asked the blessing, and the girls sat down, while the men waited on them and brought them supper. After a merry hour we danced again, and the incident of the wishing stone was soon forgotten in the frolic of the old Virginia reel. Miss Ellen led this old fashioned dance with me, and many a pretty ankle was displayed that night as toes were pointed and courtesies made, and many a little love scene, too, went on that night, but I was too busy with my own affairs to watch what others did.

When the candles had burnt down to their sockets and Mr. Lamb said the band had struck, then began the good nights, which lasted for another half an hour. The wagons were brought round and the horses saddled, and soon the whole gay company started like a cavalcade. Long after they had left we could hear them singing through the pines.

Bud saddled his horse and rode out into the night to think of some young girl, I thought, but Miss Ellen said no; that sometimes when he became restless he would ride for hours and return always with a brighter heart and more cheerfully take up the burden of his life again. When I bade Miss Ellen good night on the landing I held the tips of her fingers for a moment.

"You are my queen tonight!" I cried earnestly.

She let me raise her fingers to my lips and looked down at me in a sad, sweet way. Then, laughing softly and somehow, I felt, a little bitterly, she said:

"Your queen of tonight will be your cook again tomorrow."

Before I could reach her side, for my impulse was to throw myself at her feet and pour out my love to her, she glided swiftly up the stairs.

Within the next week I received a copy of the paper with my letter in it, prominently placed on the first page, and a note in the same mail from the editor congratulating me on the excellence of it. He told me to send one or two more from Georgia and then to push on and write up the bayou counties in Louisiana. He liked the dialogues and suggested that I give more interviews with the farmers. I read my letter in print, and it again struck me that I had not made it clear to my conservative readers that it was to the sons of the antebellum, slaveholding families that the south had to look for its regeneration and renewed prosperity; that it was this element which was rebuilding the fortunes in that section and not the few men from the north who had gone there to invest money. If I dared to draw a picture of the Buds and the Ellens of the south how the people of the old commonwealth would read the future of this sunny land and appreciate the struggle of its younger generation to overcome the obstacles which they had inherited in consequence of war!

A fine sense of honor had kept me from making use of the life at the Pines as a basis for a letter, but I longed to handle the subject as I saw it and to make others see it through my eyes and appreciate its beauty. Shut in my room away from the influence of Miss Ellen, of Bud and even of the colonel, I argued that such a letter could do no harm and might induce to much good. I do not hide from myself even now that there was with me a certain satisfaction in pleasing those in the home office, nor did I conceal from myself then the additional prestige such a letter might give me with my critics. The editor had complimented me on the first letter. What would be not do when he received one written with a pen guided by love and every word of it poured from the heart? If Miss Ellen loved me, I argued, she would only rejoice with me over my success. And then, too, she might not see it. This last thought brought a blush to my cheek, and I started up, determined to show her my letter and tell her what I contemplated doing.

What evil genius led me to change my mind I do not know. It might have been the fates of the wishing stone whom I had angered by partially revealing the secret I had confided to them. But at the time I was pleased to think it was a coincidence I had no right to give her until I had told her of my love. Then, too, if I, who was as jealous of the family honor as Bud or even the colonel himself, saw no impropriety in making use of their heroic struggle with misfortunes, surely there could be none, I thought. When I should have told her of my love, together we would talk over these hard times, and together we would read my description of them and laugh over it, or possibly cry, for it was always the pathos of the life at the Pines which I saw and not the humor. When a woman loves she always understands, I said to myself, but I did not know then how sensitive these old families had become of criticism nor how deeply they felt their changed conditions. I had only seen their fortitude and bravery, for they would have thought it beneath them to complain of their poverty to others.

Unless I wrote some such letter, which would afford me a reasonable excuse for remaining another fortnight at the Pines, I would have to leave in a day or two at the longest, for the suggestion of the managing editor was nothing less than a politely worded order.

(Continued in next Friday's paper.)

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Loans and Investments 619,479.01	Surplus and Undivided Profits (Earned) 69,017.55
Real Estate, Furniture and Fixtures 24,000.00	Deposits 569,113.43
Over Draft 7.68	
\$713,130.98	\$713,130.98

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