

SWEET REVENGE

By
Captain F. A. MITCHELL,
Author of "Chattanooga," "Chickamauga," Etc.

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CHAPTER I.
BUSHWHACKED.
ANDS UP!

"Why he shouted the words I don't know, for in another moment he gave me one barrel, and before I could raise a finger I heard a click, admonishing me that I was about to get the other. A thin film of smoke floating above the fence to the right and two malignant eyes peering at me from between the rails betrayed his position. Like a flash I whipped out my revolver, but before I could raise it there was another report, and my right arm dropped, numbbed by a charge of buckshot. Seizing my weapon with my left hand, I brought it to a level with the eyes behind the fence and fired. There was a sound of a body falling, and I knew that I had struck home.

Life, then a half dozen shot, did some stitching and then carefully bandaged the wound.

"There," he said, "if you move that arm within 48 hours you'll be in danger of your life. Keep quiet, and you'll come out all right."

"I must go on at once, doctor."

"You'll go part way as a corpse if you do."

The old lady declared that I should not stir out of the house till the doctor gave the word, the old gentleman bade me welcome as long as I needed to stay, the young lady who had brought me there said nothing, while the boy looked as if to lose a subject so fruitful of interest would break his heart.

"I'll send a young associate of mine," said the doctor, "if the wound opens, you must have attention at once."

"Thank you, doctor. There seems to be a great deal of commotion about a very small matter. I don't care to put so many people to so much trouble."

No one paid any attention to my protest, all busying themselves to make me comfortable. Pillows were laid beneath my head, a silk quilt was thrown over me, and a stand with a silver bowl on it was placed beside me that I might reach for anything I wanted. All being satisfactorily arranged, the doctor ordered everybody out of the room and then departed himself.

What a singular transition! Half an hour before I had left Huntsville—beautiful Huntsville, nestling among the hills that slope away from the Cumberland plateau—and was working my way northward toward Fayetteville, Tenn. The plants in the yards beside the road were putting forth their buds, the leaves on the trees were opening, insects were awakening, birds singing—all revived by the rays of the vernal sun.

I permitted my horse to drop into a walk. A pleasant languor stole over me, replacing a bitter mental turbulence which had been ever present with me for months. Perhaps it was the genial warmth, the balmy air; perhaps an absence of war scenes with which I had long been familiar; perhaps both. At any rate, I watched the sun glisten on the dewdrops, felt its rays warm my shoulders, and listened to the singing of the birds with a consciousness that, after all, sometimes it is pleasant to live.

Then came an unaccountable sinking. It may have been something in the restfulness, the security I had felt, incongruous with pestilential war; just as amid the luxurious foliage of the tropics one feels that behind every leaf and flower lurks invisible fever. Suddenly the shots rang out; then came my reply to the girl standing beside me looking at the dead bushwhacker; then my entry into the house, and now I was lying on a comfortable lounge an object of tender solicitude on the part of people who, from being strangers, had suddenly become very dear friends.

But suppose they knew me—that I was a renegade, a traitor to the south. There was no name harsh enough among Confederates for those of their own people who were not with them, and all who were not with them were against them, and doubtless these new found friends were all Confederate sympathizers. The bushwhacker could tell no tales. I was thankful for that, for he had known me well. The thought of him took me back to that night of horrors. I was again at the head of those Tennessee Unionists endeavoring to lead them to a haven of safety. We were near the Cumberland gap. One more day and we should be at Camp Dick Robinson, where we should find Federal troops. Then the attack. By the flashing of guns I could see their faces, and here and there recognize a neighbor—men beside whom I had lived for years, and whom one by one I saw my friends shot down. There was one dearer to me than all besides. Through the darkness, guided by the flashes and the sound of my voice, she darted to me, and found refuge in my arms.

Then that sudden dash of Confederate cavalry. I felt the figure I held quiver and slip through my arms. I mopped and kissed the white lips; then, like lightning, the wild beast jumped within me. I looked up to see who had done this last, this crowning atrocity. A Confederate officer sat on his horse staring at me, in his hand a smoking pistol. A sudden collapse, and I knew that I was hit. This is all I remembered of the massacre.

How I glowered in my revenge! The bones of men who had committed those murders were burning, and I had applied the torch. Their barns, grain—everything they possessed—passed away in black spark spangled clouds, which shot upward as if to carry vengeance to the very heavens. These men had made my life a waste; I had made theirs a hell.

There was one I had not yet punished, one whose punishment I longed for more than all the rest—the Confederate officer with the smoking pistol. I sought for him without success. Then I tried to forget him, but whenever I remembered that beloved figure fleeing to me for protection, that tremor, that sinking away before the blight of death, I would start again on my long hunt. I joined the army, thinking that

war's greater horrors might for a time enable me to forget my feud. All went well till I heard of him. He was at Huntsville. I burned to reach him. Our general was casting covetous eyes on northern Alabama. I begged him to let me go down and bring back a report of the country, the railroads, its rolling stock, machine shops, bridges, everything—a knowledge of which would assist in its capture.

But this low cur who had tried to kill me—he was at the massacre. With my own hand I had applied fire to his miserable hut. How had he known that I was in Alabama? Had he heard of me during my stay at Huntsville? It had been brief, for as soon as I reached that town I learned that my enemy was not there and, disappointed, turned my face northward. Or had the bushwhacker met me by chance? I did not know. I do not know now. Of one thing I was certain—he was one of my old enemies, and they would hunt me like a hare.

I lay for hours unwillingly turning over these war horrors as if they were a wheel on which I was obliged to tread. No one came into the room, and I called no one. Doubtless they wished me to be quiet. I was weak and tired—in mind, tired in body, tired of existence. If I could only find him, the world might vanish for all me.

I fell into a troubled slumber, and when I awoke I saw standing in the doorway a girl of 8 or 9 years—a frail, blue eyed little thing, with her hair cut square above her neck and held by a semicircular comb. She was gazing at me intently, as children in fairy tales stand on tiptoe and look at the sleeping ogre who is intending to eat them for supper.

"Come in," I said encouragingly. She shrank back. But, though she seemed to dread me, she could not keep away from me. Without for a moment taking her eyes off me she began to approach by slow, very slow, steps. I felt as if I were a snake charming a bird.

"Don't be afraid of me," I said. "I won't hurt you."

"You killed him," she pointed like an accusing angel to the opposite side of the road, where I had left the body of my would be assassin. Her voice was soft, but her eyes were big with the enormity of my act.

"Sweetheart, don't look at me that way. Come and kiss me."

I reached out for her hand. She shrank away, but I gently pulled her to me with my well arm, drew her pure young lips with mine the crimes of which I had been thinking, vivid as the day they were committed, seemed to move far from me, like a retreating storm muttering in the distance. And somehow, with this bit of innocence in my arm, my hand brushing her cheek, looking into her mild eyes, it seemed as if there had come a patch of blue sky, and I wished—yes, strangely enough, I wished—that it had not been necessary for me to shoot a man that morning.

You have placed me under an obligation which"—

"Tut, tut! You know our southern customs—we are nothing if not hospitable. You are a southern man, of course?"

"Of course," I spoke the words hesitatingly.

"Your state?"

"Tennessee."

"East, middle or west?"

"East."

Mr. Stanforth paused. There was no information as to my sentiments in the fact that I hailed from east Tennessee. More than two-thirds of the people of that section were with the Union.

"May I ask, sir," said my host, with an evident intention of ending all doubt in regard to the side with which I was affiliated, "are you a Union or a Confederate sympathizer?"

I was about to declare myself an ardent supporter of the Confederacy when my little friend Ethel, who had visited me on the day I was shot, appeared in the doorway, her blue eyes looking straight into mine. Had my intended falsehood been rammed back into my throat with the butt of a revolver it could not have been more effectually stopped. Then something impelled me to turn my glance to Helen. She was about to pour a liquid from a vial into a glass and had paused, her eyes fixed on me intently.

"Mr. Stanforth," I said, "you and your family have been too kind for me to deceive you. I will not do that, but it would not serve my purpose to declare myself."

"You are an honorable man, sir, whatever and whatever you are," exclaimed my host.

"Come in," I said encouragingly. She shrank back. But, though she seemed to dread me, she could not keep away from me. Without for a moment taking her eyes off me she began to approach by slow, very slow, steps. I felt as if I were a snake charming a bird.

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CHAPTER II.
INCognito.

THESE kind people with whom I was lodged persisted in considering me always in danger. A doctor must needs be at all times within reach, a strippling of a medical graduate must sleep in the same room with me, the old gentleman was constantly coming into the room to ask if I wanted anything, while his wife was as tender and motherly as if I had been her own son. Even the servants vied with each other in waiting on me, and when anything was ordered for me with haste unusual to the negro they scrambled to see which one would bring it. Only the girl who had brought me there came and went as though I was an ordinary person with an ordinary wound, to be treated in an ordinary manner.

All this attention and sympathy vexed me beyond measure. What right had I to accept it—I, a Tennesseean, in arms against the south, in search of a Confederate enemy? Yes, and more—I was not the bearer of information that would enable the hated Yankee to swoop down on this fair region and reclaim it for the Union? The least suspicion of my true character would turn the devotion lavished upon me to contempt. My very life would be in danger. Poo! What cared I for my life, except that I dreaded to go to my long home detested by those who had succored me. Besides, the information I possessed—information of vital importance to the Union cause—must be carried northward.

A crisis came soon enough. It was evening, and I was reclining on my sofa looking out upon the beautiful hills lying to the eastward. The girl with the cool head and impassive face was standing by a table rearranging books and bottles and what not which had been in use during the day. Suddenly the door opened, and my host entered. I saw at once by his expression that something had occurred to put him on his guard, or perhaps he had been thinking, wondering what kind of person he was harboring. At any rate, he came up and, drawing a chair beside me, began to talk. It was plain that he wished to ask me questions, but he was too kind, too generous to one in my condition, too hospitable, to ask them directly.

"The doctor tells me, Mr.—" he began. "Upon my word, you have been with us three days, sir, and we don't know even your name."

"Branderstane, John Branderstane. I am equally ignorant to whom I am indebted for all this attention."

"Our name is Stanforth, sir. This is my daughter Helen, Mr. Branderstane."

Helen inclined her head slightly, and I raised mine far enough from the pillows to do the same.

"Mr. Stanforth," I said—there was gratitude both in my voice and in my eyes—"whoever bears your name may hereafter call upon me for any service.

"Why is your life of little moment to you?" she asked.

"You overheard?"

"Yes."

"You have a right to require me to disclose my affiliations in the great struggle in which we are involved, but my private griefs"—

"I ask your pardon." There was no regret expressed. It was simply a well bred way of noticing that she had failed to elicit the information she desired.

"I should have got on well enough," I continued, "if that confounded stand had not been in the way. I believe I could go now just as well as not." I paused. I was very weak. "May I ask you to hand me that glass?" I added, looking at a tumbler containing brandy.

Without noticing the proof of my inability to do as I asserted she handed me the glass and when I had taken a swallow put it back on the table. Her coolness was beginning to irritate me.

"I have a mind to get up and go on," I said. "I don't believe there is any danger."

"What did the doctor say?"

"He told me to keep quiet as I valued my life."

"You don't value your life; therefore you will get up and go on—in other words, commit suicide."

"You know very well that it galls me to be obliged to impose upon a family that has lodged me with kindness without declaring my identity."

"Then why not declare it?"

"Because it doesn't suit my plans to do so."

I was acting ungraciously, recklessly, and I knew it, but I was in no condition to fence with this cool creature.

"Shall I leave you?" she asked, without appearing at all offended.

"I don't need your attention."

"You need some one's attention. I will have Jackson sit in the hall, where he can hear you if you ring." And she walked out of the room.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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CONDENSED TIME TABLE IN EFFECT JULY 1, 1901.

NORTH BOUND.

| EASTERN TIME | NORTH BOUND. | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 4 | 6 | 10 | 14 | 2 |
| Pittsburgh | Leave | 8:00 | 8:40 | 9:20 | 10:00 |
| Allegheny | Arrive | 8:15 | 8:55 | 9:35 | 10:15 |
| Butterfield | Leave | 8:30 | 9:10 | 9:50 | 10:30 |
| Brookville | Arrive | 8:45 | 9:25 | 10:05 | 10:45 |
| Dayton | Leave | 9:00 | 9:40 | 10:20 | 11:00 |
| Punkasawney | Arrive | 9:15 | 9:55 | 10:35 | 11:15 |
| Big Run | Leave | 9:30 | 10:10 | 10:50 | 11:30 |
| C. & M. Junction | Arrive | 9:45 | 10:25 | 11:05 | 11:45 |
| West Moretown | Leave | 10:00 | 10:40 | 11:20 | 12:00 |
| Falls Creek | Arrive | 10:15 | 10:55 | 11:35 | 12:15 |
| Rockwayville | Leave | 10:30 | 11:10 | 11:50 | 12:30 |
| Ridgway | Arrive | 10:45 | 11:25 | 12:05 | 12:45 |
| Johnsonburg | Leave | 11:00 | 11:40 | 12:20 | 13:00 |
| St. J. Jewett | Arrive | 11:15 | 11:55 | 12:35 | 13:15 |
| Newtown | Leave | 11:30 | 12:10 | 12:50 | 13:30 |
| Bradford | Arrive | 11:45 | 12:25 | 13:05 | 13:45 |
| Johnstown | Leave | 12:00 | 12:40 | 13:20 | 14:00 |
| Ridgway | Arrive | 12:15 | 12:55 | 13:35 | 14:15 |
| Falls Creek | Leave | 12:30 | 13:10 | 13:50 | 14:30 |
| DuBois | Arrive | 12:45 | 13:25 | 14:05 | 14:45 |
| C. & M. Junction | Leave | 13:00 | 13:40 | 14:20 | 15:00 |
| Big Run | Arrive | 13:15 | 13:55 | 14:35 | 15:15 |
| Punkasawney | Leave | 13:30 | 14:10 | 14:50 | 15:30 |
| West Moretown | Arrive | 13:45 | 14:25 | 15:05 | 15:45 |
| Dayton | Leave | 14:00 | 14:40 | 15:20 | 16:00 |
| Echo | Arrive | 14:15 | 14:55 | 15:35 | 16:15 |
| Craneville | Leave | 14:30 | 15:10 | 15:50 | 16:30 |
| Butterfield | Arrive | 14:45 | 15:25 | 16:05 | 16:45 |
| Allegheny | Leave | 15:00 | 15:40 | 16:20 | 17:00 |
| Pittsburgh | Arrive | 15:15 | 15:55 | 16:35 | 17:15 |

Additional train leaves Butler for Punkasawney 7:45 A. M. daily, except Sundays.

SOUTH BOUND.

| EASTERN TIME | SOUTH BOUND. | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 13 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 7 |
| Rochester | Leave | 7:30 | 8:10 | 8:50 | 9:30 |
| Buffalo | Arrive | 7:45 | 8:25 | 9:05 | 9:45 |
| Bradford | Leave | 8:00 | 8:40 | 9:20 | 10:00 |
| Newtown | Arrive | 8:15 | 8:55 | 9:35 | 10:15 |
| Johnstown | Leave | 8:30 | 9:10 | 9:50 | 10:30 |
| Ridgway | Arrive | 8:45 | 9:25 | 10:05 | 10:45 |
| Falls Creek | Leave | 9:00 | 9:40 | 10:20 | 11:00 |
| DuBois | Arrive | 9:15 | 9:55 | 10:35 | 11:15 |
| C. & M. Junction | Leave | 9:30 | 10:10 | 10:50 | 11:30 |
| Big Run | Arrive | 9:45 | 10:25 | 11:05 | 11:45 |
| Punkasawney | Leave | 10:00 | 10:40 | 11:20 | 12:00 |
| West Moretown | Arrive | 10:15 | 10:55 | 11:35 | 12:15 |
| Dayton | Leave | 10:30 | 11:10 | 11:50 | 12:30 |
| Echo | Arrive | 10:45 | 11:25 | 12:05 | 12:45 |
| Craneville | Leave | 11:00 | 11:40 | 12:20 | 13:00 |
| Butterfield | Arrive | 11:15 | 11:55 | 12:35 | 13:15 |
| Allegheny | Leave | 11:30 | 12:10 | 12:50 | 13:30 |
| Pittsburgh | Arrive | 11:45 | 12:25 | 13:05 | 13:45 |

Additional train leaves Butler for Punkasawney 7:45 A. M. daily, except Sundays.

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EASTWARD.

| STATIONS. | 10:00 | 10:10 | 10:20 | 10:30 | 10:40 | 10:50 | 11:00 | 11:10 | 11:20 | 11:30 | 11:40 | 11:50 | 12:00 |
|------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Pittsburgh | Leave | 10:00 | 10:10 | 10:20 | 10:30 | 10:40 | 10:50 | 11:00 | 11:10 | 11:20 | 11:30 | 11:40 | 11:50 |
| Allegheny | Arrive | 10:15 | 10:25 | 10:35 | 10:45 | 10:55 | 11:05 | 11:15 | 11:25 | 11:35 | 11:45 | 11:55 | 12:05 |
| Butterfield | Leave | 10:30 | 10:40 | 10:50 | 11:00 | 11:10 | 11:20 | 11:30 | 11:40 | 11:50 | 12:00 | 12:10 | 12:20 |
| Brookville | Arrive | 10:45 | 10:55 | 11:05 | 11:15 | 11:25 | 11:35 | 11:45 | 11:55 | 12:05 | 12:15 | 12:25 | 12:35 |
| Dayton | Leave | 11:00 | 11:10 | 11:20 | 11:30 | 11:40 | 11:50 | 12:00 | 12:10 | 12:20 | 12:30 | 12:40 | 12:50 |
| Punkasawney | Arrive | 11:15 | 11:25 | 11:35 | 11:45 | 11:55 | 12:05 | 12:15 | 12:25 | 12:35 | 12:45 | 12:55 | 13:05 |
| Big Run | Leave | 11:30 | 11:40 | 11:50 | 12:00 | 12:10 | 12:20 | 12:30 | 12:40 | 12:50 | 13:00 | 13:10 | 13:20 |
| C. & M. Junction | Arrive | 11:45 | 11:55 | 12:05 | 12:15 | 12:25 | 12:35 | 12:45 | 12:55 | 13:05 | 13:15 | 13:25 | 13:35 |
| West Moretown | Leave | 12:00 | 12:10 | 12:20 | 12:30 | 12:40 | 12:50 | 13:00 | 13:10 | 13:20 | 13:30 | 13:40 | 13:50 |
| Falls Creek | Arrive | 12:15 | 12:25 | 12:35 | 12:45 | 12:55 | 13:05 | 13:15 | 13:25 | 13:35 | 13:45 | 13:55 | 14:05 |
| Rockwayville | Leave | 12:30 | 12:40 | 12:50 | 13:00 | 13:10 | 13:20 | 13:30 | 13:40 | 13:50 | 14:00 | 14:10 | 14:20 |
| Ridgway | Arrive | 12:45 | 12:55 | 13:05 | 13:15 | 13:25 | 13:35 | 13:45 | 13:55 | 14:05 | 14:15 | 14:25 | 14:35 |
| Johnsonburg | Leave | 13:00 | 13:10 | 13:20 | 13:30 | 13:40 | 13:50 | 14:00 | 14:10 | 14:20 | 14:30 | 14:40 | 14:50 |
| St. J. Jewett | Arrive | 13:15 | 13:25 | 13:35 | 13:45 | 13:55 | 14:05 | 14:15 | 14:25 | 14:35 | 14:45 | 14:55 | 15:05 |
| Newtown | Leave | 13:30 | 13:40 | 13:50 | 14:00 | 14:10 | 14:20 | 14:30 | 14:40 | 14:50 | 15:00 | 15:10 | 15:20 |
| Bradford | Arrive | 13:45 | 13:55 | 14:05 | 14:15 | 14:25 | 14:35 | 14:45 | 14:55 | 15:05 | 15:15 | 15:25 | 15:35 |
| Johnstown | Leave | 14:00 | 14:10 | 14:20 | 14:30 | 14:40 | 14:50 | 15:00 | 15:10 | 15:20 | 15:30 | 15:40 | 15:50 |
| Ridgway | Arrive | 14:15 | 14:25 | 14:35 | 14:45 | 14:55 | 15:05 | 15:15 | 15:25 | 15:35 | 15:45 | 15:55 | 16:05 |
| Falls Creek | Leave | 14:30 | 14:40 | 14:50 | 15:00 | 15:10 | 15:20 | 15:30 | 15:40 | 15:50 | 16:00 | 16:10 | 16:20 |
| DuBois | Arrive | 14:45 | 14:55 | 15:05 | 15:15 | 15:25 | 15:35 | 15:45 | 15:55 | 16:05 | 16:15 | 16:25 | 16:35 |
| C. & M. Junction | Leave | 15:00 | 15:10 | 15:20 | 15:30 | 15:40 | 15:50 | 16:00 | 16:10 | 16:20 | 16:30 | 16:40 | 16:50 |
| Big Run | Arrive | 15:15 | 15:25 | 15:35 | 15:45 | 15:55 | 16:05 | 16:15 | 16:25 | 16:35 | 16:45 | 16:55 | 17:05 |
| Punkasawney | Leave | 15:30 | 15:40 | 15:50 | 16:00 | 16:10 | 16:20 | 16:30 | 16:40 | 16:50 | 17:00 | 17:10 | 17:20 |
| West Moretown | Arrive | 15:45 | 15:55 | 16:05 | 16:15 | 16:25 | 16:35 | 16:45 | 16:55 | 17:05 | 17:15 | 17:25 | 17:35 |
| Dayton | Leave | 16:00 | 16:10 | 16:20 | 16:30 | 16:40 | 16:50 | | | | | | |