Captain F. A. MITCHEL, Author of "Chattanooga," "Chicka-mauga," Etc.

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We four who were armed with carbines knelt behind the rocks, I to the extreme left, Helen next, then Buck behind the stone we had moved to fill the gap, with Ginger bringing up the right end of the line. I was an excellent shot-I had long been considered one of the best in Tennessee-and it turned out that Helen was not had Ginger was no shot at all. I selected the man in advance for my especial object, designated the second for Helen and gave Buck the third. They were to fire after me in the order named. Ginger was to fire at any who might be left standing. Jack had only a revolvor, and I directed her to keep back. She was trembling, and in order to strengthen her by concentrating her mind on



I shot my man through the heart. some duty I told her to be ready to hand us the ammunition after the first

The guerrillas came on, every man holding a carbine. When they had covered a third of the distance, I saw that Buck was about to fire out of turn, and I was obliged to speak to him some-what sharply. I think the advancing men heard me, for they stopped and consulted. The captain, standing below, called to them to go on, and, separating so as to leave a dozen yards between each man, skirmish fashion, they started again, watching eagerly for a sight of something to fire at. As they were all abreast, my order for firing would not serve. I gave another. "I'll take the left man, Miss Stan-

forth the center, Buck the right." There was no response. All were too intent on the work before us to speak. I permitted the men to come within a hundred yards, when, taking deliberate aim with the rest, I shot my man through the heart. In another mo-ment Helen's rifle cracked, and the center man dropped. Buck, who was excited, fired wild and missed alto-Ginger lost his head completely and did not fire at all. As Gin-

to her all of a sudden. cried, with flashing eyes. Snatching his gun and aiming it at the remaining man, who was rapidly getting down the declivity, she sent him the rest of the way with a limp. Two men were put out of the fight and the third dis-

"By golly," cried Buck, "we licked 'em, didn't we?"

I thought it best not to discourage him by telling him that this was only a preliminary skirmish, but asked Jack for the ammunition, and we all reload-

The wounded man went back to the captain, who appeared greatly agitated over the result. He was evidently surprised at the reception of his searching party. The men who had gone to the flanks, hearing the firing, rejoined their leader, and two men who had been in the rear came forward.

Heaven preserve us! The captain has started up the slope at the head of a storming party of eight men.

I was appalled. We had but four guns and after firing a volley must relond before firing another. We could not expect to disable more than four men at the first fire; then the remaining four would be upon us before we could relond. In quick tones I gave the or-

FAll load. I'll fire." With that I let drive and dropped a man. Then, throwing down my gun, I took Helen's and dropped another.

Buck handed me his, and I dropped a "By jiminy!" cried Buck, exposing

his head to see better. "Ain't yo' a bully shot?" Ping! went a bullet within an inch of his ear, and he ducked.

'Keep down!" I cried as the lead rattled against the rocks in front of us. and fired the fourth gun, again hitting man, though I only "winged" bim. Indeed, I believe he dropped to evade the fire. By this time the first gun had been reloaded, and I took gim at the aptain. I was sure I hit him, but he Taking the pext gun now dy, I fired at him again, but just as I did so one of the men stepped in front of him and received the shot. This finished the aseault. The men proke and fied and before I could get another shot were far back toward the position from which they had started.

TRANGE that men will never a force bearing. nable position, protected by breastwocks and able to pour shot down a steep hill at an enemy. Two men, two girls and a boy had defeated the guerrillas and sent them back to their enup. I did not fear another attack. What I dreaded was starvation. Indeed, I could see plainly that our enepiles were preparing to carry out the

starvation plan. Several of them went in different directions, doubtless for food. One of them passed quite within

"I'm goin to plunk that one," said Buck.

I caught his arm, and gave him a reproof which for a while at least caused him to remember that I was in command.

"I wish they'd attack us ngain," said the irrepressible boy. "I could 'a' hit that doggone 'buttermit' if somep'n hadn't toggled my arm."

There had been nothing to joggle the rm, but I thought it best to let him keep up his pride-it would make him more serviceable so I said noth-

"I almed right at the middle of his breast," continued Buck, "but just then he jumped over a stone, an I missed

"I thought some one Joggled your arm?"

"Some one did. Ginger, ye' consarned old nigger, what d' yo' go Joggle me fo' Just as I was goin to plunk him?" "I didn't Joggle yo', Mars' Bucs."
"Was it you, Hel'n?"

"Somebody did, or I'd 'a' hit him,

If ever a party needed breakfast, it was ours. Helea unrolled the little parcel of provisions. I directed her to erve a half ration, or, rather, half of what there was and save the rest. Sho did so, handing me my portion, which I declined, but she argued that it was important for all that I should keep up my strength and finally prevailed on me to cat my share. Jaqueline and Buck ate theirs ravenously. Each of us went to where the water was dripping from the cleft and caught the drops in our mouths. Buck, when he had finished his breakfast, like Oliver Twist, asked for more. It made my heart ache to refuse him, but there was no alternative.

One danger was dwarfed by the greater perils that surrounded us, yet it was no less important. My wound was liable to put me hors de combat at any moment. Fortunately until my dash from the guerrilla camp I had not been subject to any physical strain, and by that time it had healed sufficiently to prevent its opening. At any rate, it gave me no trouble. The first thing Helen asked after a full in the fighting was about this wound. She insisted on dressing it for me, and I permitted her to do so. She wound around it a fresh bandage torn from my shirt sleeve and was pinning it when, look-

ing up at me, she said: "You're not the first one of our men

I've assisted with bandages." Her remark cut me like a knife. It was plain that she was making this effort, incurring this dauger, believing me to be a Confederate.

"I can't understand all these troubles that surround you," she went on. "Why not explain?"

in league with the Yankees."

"Yes, but your accusers are robbers and murderers. If I thought that"ger's courage deserted him Jack's came | She broke off with a frown and turned

> "The guerrillas built a fire and, after cooking and eating breakfast, loitered about, some chatting, some playing cards, while others devoted themselves to their wounded companions, making them as comfortable as possible on beds of boughs covered with blankets. took advantage of their inaction to learn how Buck had succeeded in delivering his message to the scout he was to meet at Huntsville. As I could not question him before the others without giving up my secret, I drew him into the cleft behind us.

"Buck, did you find the man I sent you to meet at Huntsville?" "Reckon I did."

"Tell me about it." "All right. As soon as I got into town I went right to the squar an stopned in front o' the hotel. I hitched my pony to a post an went inside. A man in the office said, 'Sonny, what d' yo want? an I said, 'I'm goin up on the gallery,' an he said. What fo'?' an I said, 'Fo' to see the town.' Then 1 went up stairs an waited till I heard



"He stood a lookin at me kind o' quer " the eleck strikin an counted thilteen." "Not 13, Buck. Clocks don't sirke

"Well, don't yo' see, that clock at Huntsville is a different kind. It

struck either thi'teen or to teen, a couldn't tell which." "Never mind the clock.

venting all this. Go on." "Well, just as the clock struck a man he came out on to the gallery. He had the doggonest eyes I ever saw-just like the wolf's in 'Red Riding Hood.' At first he didn't take any notice o' me, lookin 's if he was bothered 'cause I was that an he expected somebody. Then he watched me with those sharp eyes o' his'n, an at last he said kind o' "Tis a fine day, boy,' an I said, sold I what was it I was to say?"

" Reckon you're weather wise, stranger

Oh, yes, I know, but I couldn't re member 'zactly, an I said, said I, 'Reckon vo're weather beaten, stranger.' He stood a lookin at me kind o' quar, an I heard bim a gruntin somep'n like 'Gness I am beat somehow or 'nuther. Then he asked me somen'n 'bout whether it was a-rainin at the time of thewhat was that one?"
"The massacre."

"Oh, yes; I know, An I said-what

" Black as night." "That's it; only I fo'got an said,

'Black as a doggone nigger,' an he sald, 'What's the'"-" Word,"

" What's the word? an I took the spitball out o' my mouth an handed it him. He took it an read it mighty quick. Then he looked at me an said, 'I'll be goldarned if that ain't the lit tlest messenger to carry such a big message I ever saw in my life! Like attackin a fortyfication with a how't

"What did he do then?" "I don' want t' tell that."

"Well, he must 'a' thought I was a

baby." "Come, out with it."

"He took me up an give me a kiss. rubbin my face with that hairy beard o' bis'n." "Then what?"

"He went down stairs in a burry, an I didn't see him any mo'."

"Good for you! Have you kept it all A Secret ?"

'Haven't said a word to any one." "That's right. You've done me a great favor, and one good turn deserves another. I'm going to tell you how to cure yourself of that habit of using useless adjectives. If you ever get out of this, get a notebook and pencil, and every time you use one of them note it down. This will show you how often you offend, and at last you will break yourself of a very bad habit."

"I'll do that, by golly!" At noon we were again tantalized at seeing the guerrillas eating their din-

wonder what they got," said "I reekon it's nothin but fat pork, anyway. Who wants to eat fat pork?"

"I wish I could get my clutches on the captain," said Jack. "I'd make him "De Lord 'll feed his chil'n." remark-

ed Ginger. "Didn' he send de ravens to 'Not in these mountains," put in

Buck, "Ravens couldn't find anything up here to feed anybody with." Reckon dat mus' 'a' been in a land flowin wid milk an honey," supple mented Ginger. "Yo' ole fool," retorted Buck, "How

could a rayen carry milk?" "Don't be so smart, Buck," sald Jack. "A rayen could take the handle of a

You know I'm charged with being tin bucket in its mouth and fly with it, Then Jack and Buck fell to vying with each other which could invent

the most remarkable fabrications about the wherewithal to satisfy their hun-"I see a darky coming," said Jack, "with a white apron and cap and a

tray on his head covered with good things to eat."

"That's nothin," said Buck. "I see a roasted goose waddlin up the hill with the stuffin tumblin out of a hole in his breast."

"You little fibber, you don't see any such thing. I'll tell you what I see. I see a big table down there among the guerrillas covered with smoking beef and chicken and lamb with mint sauce running all over it and peas and as-

paragus. Come, let's go and get some." She was so earnest about it that I feared she would. Indeed she started, but Helen caught and drew her back. Throwing herself into Helen's arms, she covered her face with her hands.

> CHAPTER XIV. A CONFIRE DEFENSE.

ORNING, noon, afternoon, passed with no change in the situation. All my command slept during the day, and even I got two or three hours of tired nature's sweet restorer, though I would not close my eyes till Helen had promised not to take hers off the guerrillas till I awoke. During the afternoon all began to suffer from hunger, but I would not allow the scanty bit of food remaining to be eaten. Buck got over the noon meal bravely, but when supper time came he clamored for something to eat.

"Now, see byar, Mr. Brandystone," he argued, "you just give me my shar', an I won't want any mo' when the rest of yo' have yo's."

"You must wait, Buck. We shall have to fast long enough anyway. The longer between meals the longer we "All right," he said bravely. "I can

hold out as long as any of yo'."

As evening came on a horrible thought loomed up suddenly. If the night should be dark, there was nothing to prevent the guerrillas stealing up on us unawares and capturing our strong-

muttered and began an examination of the face of the rock in our rear. The cleft where water dripped slanted up-ward, a narrow, opening little wider

than a man's body. I crawled into the crevice and by using hands and feet mounted to the summit. I stood enchanted by the splendid view. Northward and eastward the Cumberland mountains reared their heads, a succession of wooded crests; westward the fair plain of middle Tennessee; south ward Confederate territory cut off from us by war and setting atlame the imagination as to what was taking place in the newborn nation. An undulating horizon divided the black earth from the scarlet sky left by the setting sun.

Scrambling over the uneven ground, elimbing rocks, fighting my way through thickets, I explored every promise of outlet. There was not a possible de-I returned to the mouth of the erevice, intending to rejoin my companions. I heard some one clambering up and, looking down, saw Helen Stan-Giving her my hand, I helped her to level ground.
"You and I," I said, "should not be

absent from the front at the same

"Tell me," she said, fixing her eyes on me intently, "what I want to know. I have led Jaqueline, Buck and Ginger into this trap in an attempt to save you. The least I can expect is your confidence. Who are you?"

Our lives depended on absolute devotion to each other. If I should tell her that I was a southern man holding a commission in the Yankee army, that I had sent information north to enable a Union general to capture the region about her home, I should sap our main element of strength. On the other hand, I was accepting all this devotion under false pretenses. The thought was maddening. Had she not been looking at me with her big honest eyes I believe I should have shed tears of anguish.

"Miss Stanforth--Heleu." I said "who and what I am can be of no moment now with death staring us in the face. You and I have a control ourpose-to save those who have been led into this peril. There is no time for explanations. I beg of you to banish for the time this secret and think only of the work before us."

She turned her eyes out to the far distant horizon, but did not see it, in-tent on her own thoughts. Then, looking again at me, she said, with a burst of impulse:

"To know that you are unworthy would kill me."

I bowed my head to escape her gaze. When I looked again, she had turned and was entering the crevice.

Having failed to find an outlet in our rear, we had no choice but to face our enemies. I east my eyes over the only route open to a night surprise. On our right, not far below, was the bare face of a rock 20 feet high, around which was no path. To the left another rock projected in such fashion that while an enemy climbed over it his silhonette would appear against the sky. Noticing an abundance of firewood



I bowed my head to escape her gaz scattered about. I resolved to build a bonfire, with a view to lighting up our enemies should they attempt to steal upon us in the night. As soon as it was dark enough I sent Buck and Ginger out to gather wood and, selecting a flat rock midway between those on the flanks, scooped together some light, dry stuff for kindling and as fast as the wood was brought me put it on. When all was ready, we returned to our for-

But how light a fire? There was not a match in the party. Indeed the only means of ignition we possessed was a percussion cap. I sacrificed two cartridges and poured the powder they contained into a bir of paper, intending

to explode it with percussion powder. Night attacks always occur just before dawn, and I felt confident that we should hear from the guerrillas, if at all, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning. At 1 I awoke the command and issued our remaining ration. It was eaten ravenously, and when the last morsel had been consumed I told all to be ready at the slightest sound. I was going down to the unlighted fire, and in case they heard me hammering the percussion powder they would know I had heard the enemy approach-Then, taking Jack's revolver, I

I passed down to my firewood, inspected it to see that it was all right, then went on farther, crawling on my stomach and listening. Noticing what in the darkness I supposed to be a log. I resolved to crawl up behind it for concenhment. On reaching it I rabeed my head and looked down into the face of a dead man. It was the body of one of the guerrillas we had shot during the day. This uncanny object, encountered at dead of night, startled me, There were the ghostly sain, the sunken cheel, the open month, willle the eyes " staring upfut the honvens us to y saw wenders tilden from the liv-I drew buck. A consciousness of the horrors that awaited us struck me like a gust of cold wind. Perhaps be-

fore marning fielen Stanforth or Jaque line or little Buck or all of us would be lying stiff and stark like that dead

guerrilla. Then a greater strength, a daring, a cunning never before felt welled within me. I crawled on till I came so near the guerrilla camp that I could have thrown a stone into it. They had no fire, and this in itself was suspicious, I thought I heard a voice, but it was doubtless some animal or a bird giving a note of warning to its mate. I lis tened, but could hear nothing which I knew to be human. At last I sat down on a rock and began what to me seem ed an endless vigil.

It was perhaps an hour after that I heard unmistakable sounds of the guer rillas. I could see nothing, though I could hear voices, and voices at that time of night meant mischlef. Darting back to my wood, I set the paper of gunpowder on the rock under the dry grass, keeping a little in reserve, and got a stone ready to use for a hammer, then listened for a sign of advance. had not long to walt. A man must have stumbled. At any rate, I heard something which convinced me the enemy was coming, and, laying on my percussion powder, I raised the stone and brought It down.

Horror of horrors! The grass was blown away without being kindled The last chance was gone! It was dark as pitch; not even a ray of moonlight to protect us against the coming cutthroats.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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